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THE DEAD MARCH PAST

"The Dead March Past" is, in the form of an autobiographical saga, a cavalcade of events in Ireland from the outbreak of the Great War to recent times. Political happenings are merely used as a background for humorous presentation of people who have passed away. Mr. Griffin deprecates any suggestion of political bias. The motif of the book is a sardonic comment on the evanescent and rather ridiculous spasms of mass hysteria which convulsed Ireland, and especially Dublin, for some twenty years.

Against the background of the wild enthusiasm of the Irish for the cause of "The Allies" at the outbreak of "the war to end wars," and their fierce anti-German bias which merged into a rebellion, subsidised by the Germans, and later on, into an Anglo-Irish conflict and the Irish Civil War, move a galaxy of characters of high and low degree, who actually lived and are now gone.

The leading characters in the book are the tinker, Darby Donnellan, and his daughter, Rosanna, while other characters are Augustine Birrell, the Irish Chief Secretary; some of the rebels who were shot after the Easter Week Rebellion; Michael Collins, Darrell Figgis, Major MacBride, Sir John Mahaffy, the famous Provost of Trinity College, and Captain Birch who perished when the *Leinster* was torpedoed by a German submarine in Dublin Bay. The author himself appears in several chapters of the book.

THE DEAD MARCH PAST



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NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO

THE DEAD MARCH PAST

A Semi-Autobiographical Saga

BY

GERALD GRIFFIN

AUTHOR OF "GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO, THE WARRIOR BARD"

οἵη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν,
φύλλα τὰ μέν τ' ἥμενος χαμάδις χέει, δλλα δέ θ' ὅλη
τελεθώσα φύει· ἔπειρος δὲ πιγίγνεται ὥρη·
ἄς ἀνδρῶν γενεή ἡ μὲν φύει ἡ δὲ ἀπολήγει.

HOMER, *Iliad* VI (146-149).

Like the leaves on the trees generations of men come and go—
To the sob of September the wraiths of dead summer wail by;
But Spring comes anon, and the forest is lush with young green,
Thus the bier and the cradle in turn bear the passing children of men.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1937

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Book No. १३८५ G-868-D
Received On.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH

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THE DEAD MARCH PAST

I am a Connaught tinker bold,
All day I tramp the winding road
In snow and rain, in heat and cold.
I have no land nor fixed abode
But I've food and drink and fire galore.
I mend a kettle, pot or pan
And beg and steal from any man,
And then at night I sing a rann
Outside a mountainy sheebeen
To cheer the souls of thirsty men.
Oh! I'm a penny poet rare
Whose ballads sell at every fair.

—Shuiler's Song

(Translated from the Gaelic ballad
“An Shuiler Fanach,” by Blind Raftery)

PROLOGUE

(1)

MAYO is to me a land of ghosts and Dublin a city of ghosts. Both are places of poignant memories for me—memories which well up in the pages of *The Dead March Past*. All those who figure in this book have passed away. Some of them were the victims of old age, sickness or heartbreak; some, like my friends Major Willie Redmond and Captain Tom Kettle, died on the battlefields of France. Some fell in the turmoil of revolutionary fighting at home, and there were just a few who were cut off with sudden violence and thereby did the hangman out of his modest honorarium.

Sunt lacrimae rerum. The pale shades of those who were vital forces in Ireland about a score of years back arise before me in this lonely Connaught outpost as the ghosts of those he knew on earth passed in sad procession before Aeneas on his descent to Hades. And while they pass before me the fitful sea-wind wails round the cottage that shelters me, and its voice is like that of women keening for the dead, while the billows beat the shore with the melancholy monotonous cadences of monks chanting a “Miserere.”

Ghosts! Ghosts everywhere! I see Tom Kettle once more fixing on me that unforgettable look of despair with which he greeted me after the Easter Week Rebellion as he said: “Home Rule is done for. The Irish Party is finished. I’m off to France in a few days, and

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I hope I'll never return." Two months later he was killed on the Somme.

I also see Padraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, James Connolly, John Mac Bride and their comrades who faced a firing squad after the Easter Week Rebellion. Their idea of sacrifice for Ireland differed from Kettle's and Willie Redmond's, but all alike were equally sincere in their unselfish devotion to their country:

Dear shadows, now you know it all,
All the folly of a fight
With a common wrong or right.

The mobile boyish face of Michael Collins arises before me as I saw him in the Irish Club in London cracking jokes with Lord Birkenhead and old Sam Geddes, and later, a few weeks before his death, full of exuberant spirits and optimism in the office of the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*.

Captain Willie Redmond, Tom Kettle, Pearse, Macdonagh, Plunkett and Collins—peace to their ashes! In the words of Yeats:

They weighed so lightly what they gave,
But let them be, they're dead and gone,
They're with O'Leary in the grave.

(2)

I wish to forestall criticism of this book on one point, *i.e.* the sadistic obsession of the protagonists of this story, to wit, the tinker and his daughter, which caused both of them to launch forth again and again into nauseating details regarding the public execution of their ancestor for sheep-stealing. My defence of this reiteration is that, adopting the vein of the Irish *sean-*

Prologue

nachus, which is akin to that of the Icelandic saga, I have recorded faithfully from short-hand notes the vivid *viva voce* accounts of various episodes as observed by myself, or as narrated to me by Rosanna Donnellan, and recounted to her by the poet, and by Darby the Drouth, Bos-gan-soggarth, Hoke the Spud, Lonesome Pint, Steal the Hen, Yalla Meal and the Spoiled Priest, as well as by various officers of the Free State Army. It would be a violation of the spirit of the saga not to be as literal as possible in reproducing dialogue which has been transmitted second-hand.

Furthermore, for this reiteration I have the precedent of Homer, whose *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were sagas, in the primary sense of the word, inasmuch as they were passed on through the years by oral tradition from rhapsodist to rhapsodist. Homer, who knew the tendency of the human mind to repeat in speech with tedious emphasis its pet obsessions, frequently made his warring kings and generals reiterate again and again in identical phrasing, exhaustive details of their martial deeds. And then the rhapsodists handed on his hexameters, unsubedited, down the decades, until the protoplasmic publishers committed them to wax, palimpsest and papyrus.

(3)

In the sub-title to this book, I state that it is a semi-autobiographical narrative. At the outset, I deprecate the assumption that I consider my autobiography worth writing. My rôle in life has been humdrum, dull and lowly. I have been in turn a very ordinary classical master, a still more ordinary journalist on Dublin and Fleet Street papers, and an even still more ordinary literary hack. But though my life in the main has been

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cast, thank God, in the tranquil and obscure grooves of Horace's "Beatus Ille," I have been, through no seeking on my part, repeatedly thrust into situations which savoured occasionally of Greek tragedy, but more frequently of melodrama, *opéra bouffe* and horse opera. I may add that there is no political bias underlying the narrative. I loathe politics—I loathe politicians!!!

Snatched as an infant from the jaws of a voracious pig by Rosanna's mother, the tinker's wife, I fought many years later in the Easter Week Rebellion on the British side against De Valera and Thomas MacDonagh, both of whom had been my fellow-schoolmasters. I was thrown out (literally) of the *Freeman's Journal* office twice in the small hours of the morning—first by an infuriated company of Black-and-Tans, and a couple of years later by a still more infuriated company of De Valera's followers. A little later on my colleagues and myself were proscribed by the I.R.A., and loyal citizens were urged to shoot us at sight.

I was twice arrested on a charge of espionage. On the first occasion I was suspected of spying for the British Government during the Anglo-Irish war. I had very little difficulty in proving my innocence on that occasion. Two years later, however, I was in a much more critical situation, when I was court-martialled by De Valera's troops on a charge of spying in the west of Ireland on behalf of Michael Collins. A curious chain of fortuitous circumstances were marshalled against me by the prosecution, and, looking back on it, I believe the court thought me guilty.

CHAPTER I

THE TINKER “STRAFES” THE HUNS

(1)

*“An island ruled by a harmless earl
And an innocent essayist.”*

IT was in the early weeks of the “war to end wars.”

John Campbell Gordon, seventh Earl of Aberdeen and Temair, Viceroy of Ireland, and Lady Aberdeen, sat stiffly upright in their official State carriage as, headed by outriders, it swung round College Green and past the Bank of Ireland (*ci-devant* the Irish House of Parliament) *en route* for Dublin Castle, just a few hundred yards off. The Viceroy and Lady Aberdeen bowed wearily and perfunctorily to the cheering multitudes that swarmed from the pavement into the roadway. Indeed so clamorous was the ovation of the crowd that had it not been for the bodyguard of cavalry clattering over the cobblestones to the front and rear of the viceregal carriage it would have been held up by the tributary streams of the enthusiastic masses who converged simultaneously from Grafton Street, Dame Street, Westmoreland Street and Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street) upon College Green.

On the pavement outside Trinity College, facing College Green, stood the Right Honourable Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary of Ireland, and Professor Joly, watching the viceregal cavalcade clatter by. There was a twinkle in Birrell’s eye and a broad smile played about

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Professor Joly's mouth as he listened to the witty essayist's comment on the canny Scot who drove past in state as the King's representative in Ireland.

"It's a pity, Joly, you weren't present when Aberdeen was teaching the Irish people how to make tea. Aberdeen is what the Scots call an 'innocent,' and it was a droll sight to watch him with a tea-pot poised in his hand, and—"

"Good-morning, Mister Birrell!"

"Oh, good-morning, Mahaffy."

The Reverend John Pentland Mahaffy, C.V.O., D.D., D.C.L., G.B.E., Knight-Commander of the Order of the Redeemer, Provost and Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, Hon. Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, editor of the *Petri Papyri*, Corresponding Member of the Academies of Vienna, Berlin and the Lincei (Rome), bowed with slow dignity to the Right Honourable Augustine Birrell. Mr. Marshall, the College steward, who accompanied the Provost, as stately and imposing as the Provost himself, bowed simultaneously with slow dignity to the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

"I was just remarking to Birrell a few minutes ago," said Professor Joly, "that I never saw the Dublin people before greet a Viceroy with such enthusiasm. The most you ever heard was a tentative cheer here and there from a handful of loyalists. As a rule nobody took the slightest notice of the viceregal cavalcade. And to think that these are the very people who attacked the Scottish Borderers on Bachelor's Walk a few days ago after the gun-running at Howth. I witnessed the attack myself, and the Scotsmen's bloody retaliation."

Birrell chuckled.

"The funny thing is that all the soldiers in Dublin were confined to barracks after that unfortunate in-

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cident. And now I'm greatly afraid that they'll have to confine them to barracks again to prevent the friendly Dublin folk from driving them crazy with drink. It speaks well for the forgiving nature and generosity——”

“It is just mass hysteria, Birrell,” cut in the Provost. “Just mass hysteria—an emotion which the natives of this country are very prone to.”

Birrell's brows contracted and the lines around his mouth hardened.

“Mass hysteria? Do you call it mass hysteria when thousands of Dubliners are lining up outside the recruiting depots?”

“*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*,” thundered the Provost. “There is some ulterior motive behind this mania for joining up. It isn't natural. What is more, it isn't genuine, I'm afraid. Perhaps all these aborigines want is to get rifles into their hands in order to round upon England. There is always the grave danger that the natives will revert from constitutional measures to physical force. I'm very glad for this reason that Kitchener was shrewd enough to decline—or rather to ignore—Redmond's offer to defend Ireland with the forces of the National Volunteers. And I am also very glad that he has taken the precaution of putting English officers, from the lowest subaltern up, in charge of the new Irish divisions. There is no use in running the risk of a repetition of the mistake we made with the Sepoys in India. English officers must be in charge——”

“Kitchener's short-sighted tactics as well as Asquith's recent temporising with Carson are more calculated than anything else to make the Irish revert to physical force methods,” said Professor Joly.

“My attitude with regard to the 'Act for the Better Government of Ireland' or the 'Home Rule Bill,' as it is

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loosely and unofficially called, is well known," said Birrell. "I agree, however, with Professor Joly that it is a very mistaken policy to put Englishmen as officers over Irish regiments. It's plainly telling the Irish soldiers we don't trust them."

"Is that your official opinion, Birrell?" snapped the Provost.

"Oh, not at all. In fact, on matters dealing with the war I have no right to any official opinion. That is a matter for the War Minister. My remark is just—"

"*An obiter dictum*," cut in the Provost.

"Exactly, Mahaffy. *Rem acu tetigisti*. And now, I have to hop across to Dublin Castle to meet the Lord Lieutenant. But before I go, Mahaffy, let me give you a tip. Go to the Abbey Theatre, at least once a week, as I do. If you do, you will get to know the Irish people as they really are. At present, despite all the years that you have spent in Ireland, and despite the fact that you preside over the most ancient and renowned seat of learning in Ireland, you know nothing about her people. You are a profound authority on Greek syntax and accidence—you know all about the 'aorist' and 'the middle voice' and 'reduplication' and 'the lost digamma,' but you know nothing about Ireland. And—oh, talking about 'the lost digamma,' here's another *obiter dictum*, Mahaffy. Tom Kettle and myself were watching you the other day as you strolled across the College Park—your head bowed in thought. 'There goes the Provost of Trinity College looking for "the lost digamma" among the grass,' said Kettle. And Kettle was right. That's you, Mahaffy—looking for 'the lost digamma'—champion of the obsolete and outmoded. You are so preoccupied with your quest that you cannot realise the obvious fact that the very classical culture, to the furtherance of which you have devoted your life, is

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superseded here by the Celtic Renaissance, being and that, *pari passu*, the old idea of the privileged and pampered minority in this country keeping down the majority——”

“I know Ireland better than you do,” cut in the Provost with some warmth. “Yes, I do. There is a perpetual feud going on in the wretched country—a feud not merely between two creeds but between two breeds—two breeds that will never fuse, two breeds as deadly inimical to each other as the Hindus and the Mohammedans in India. And as for the Celtic Renaissance ousting the classical culture of Ireland, I was told that already, and very rudely too, some fifteen years ago by George Moore, a man who was speaking from the profundity of his abysmal ignorance, as he knew no Greek and less Gaelic. I wonder if you recall his insolent attack on me in the public Press?”

“Oh yes, Mahaffy. I remember the incident indeed. Well, some fifteen years later George rounded on all his fellow-Gaels, and said far uglier things about them in his *Hail and Farewell* than he said about you. But George was quite right in his views about the passing of classical culture, although I must admit that his method of expressing those views was not in the best taste. I am sorry as a classical student myself that this is so, but we must face the facts. People have no longer that slavish idolatry of the masterpieces of ancient literature that they had in the past. What was it George Bernard Shaw said some time ago about Homer? He said something to the effect that, little as he thought about such popular idols as Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, he thought even less about Homer, and that he considered all of them very miserable fellows compared with himself—or words to that effect.”

“And pray, my dear Birrell, what does Shaw know

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about Homer, except through the medium of a translation? His knowledge of Greek, if any, must be exceedingly flimsy. He gave up his studies, at which by his own admission, endorsed by the candid criticism of his teachers, he was a hopeless failure, at the age of fifteen, and took up a job as a clerk in Molesworth Street across the way."

He waved his hand with a sweeping gesture towards the corner where Grafton Street and Nassau Street abut on College Green.

"I like the impudence of this estate-agent's clerk," he went on, warming to his theme, "expressing opinions on matters of which he is supremely ignorant. Shaw is just a perverse paradoxist who exults in running counter to accepted views—to axiomatic dogmas, I should say, on any subject—no matter what. You recall, Birrell, the reason why Socrates claimed that he was the wisest of men. He said that it was because he did not think that he knew those things that he did not know—*ὅτι δὲ μηδὲν οὐδὲν οἶμαι εἰδέναι*. But Shaw most decidedly has not the wisdom of Socrates. An excellent playwright and a philosopher—but let him stick to his plays and his philosophy. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam!* Let the cobbler stick to his last!"

"I'm afraid we're drifting, Mahaffy. It's my fault, however. I wanted to point out to you how reactionary and stick-in-the-mud you are both culturally and politically. That's how the question of the classics drifted into our conversation. Nothing will cure you of your hopeless obsession that 'Home Rule will mean Rome Rule,' and that the Pope is 'The Scarlet Woman of Babylon,' and 'The Seventh Vial' and 'The Little Horn.'"

"Yes, Birrell, I am firmly convinced that Home Rule will mean Rome Rule. That was the view also held by

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the late King Edward VII—one of the most charming and intelligent of the many European monarchs whom I have met in my time. And during the course of my last conversation with King Edward he said to me: 'My chief trouble with regard to Ireland, Mahaffy, is that the bulk of the people there regard the Pope, and not me, as their King.' King Edward had no delusions about the certainty that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule."

"Mahaffy, you're hopeless, you indefatigable diner-out with monarchs. There's no use in arguing with a man with such hide-bound ideas as yours. Still, the fact remains that both Dublin Castle rule and classical culture will soon be things of the past in Ireland. You have to face the inevitable, Mahaffy. Canute could not stem the advancing tide. And along with classical culture and Dublin Castle rule, of both which institutions you are such a sturdy pillar, the Protestant Church of Ireland, another venerable institution which has been sacred to reactionaries, will go. It is obsolete. You are a priest of a dying creed."

"Oh no, Birrell! The Church of Ireland will not pass away. While there are any Anglo-Irish left in the country we must have Protestantism. Roman Catholicism is essentially the religion of the lower classes—it is admirably suited to the autochthonous Irish."

"The Church of Ireland will go, Mahaffy, not because of any lack of loyalty on the part of the laity. It will be destroyed by its snobbish claim to be a Church for Anglo-Irish supermen, by its Erastianism which not even the Act of Disestablishment could eradicate, and by its ultra-liberal interpretation of the scriptures adopted by its clergy. Now, take your own case. Is it not a fact that many years ago you were suspended from preaching in the College chapel for some extraordinary views of yours?"

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"Oh yes! It was after I had returned from my trip to Greece with Oscar Wilde. Oscar and I had been talking a lot about the Athenian altar 'τῷ θεῷ ἀγνώτῳ'—'To the Unknown God,' and I made it the theme of my first sermon in Trinity College after my return. I'm afraid I spoke rather bluntly about Saint Paul's arrogance in claiming that altar for the worship of Christ exclusively, whereas by the courtesy of the Athenians it was meant for any foreigners who did not worship Jove and the other Olympian deities."

"So that was the reason, was it? I was told that it was because you had spoken rather contemptuously of the Four Evangelists because they did not write in classical Greek. It was said that you despised the Greek of the New Testament as 'pidgin Greek,' and that yourself and Oscar, as classical purists, developed a superiority complex with regard to Christ Himself, as you had a theory that he spoke in the vulgarised 'Hellenistic' of Syrian preference to Hebrew, as it had by that time become a *lingua franca* in Palestine. Curious how Wilde holds this view, too, in *De Profundis*. Well, gentlemen, I'm off for Dublin Castle. See you later probably at the Mansion House. I hope dear old Asquith will get a rousing reception to-night."

So saying, the Chief Secretary for Ireland skipped with the agility of an adolescent across the cobbles of College Green, and was presently swallowed up in the receding tide of war-fevered Dubliners which swirled up Dame Street in the wake of the viceregal cortège.

"What do you mean by running down Sir Edward Carson before one of these crooked Liberals?" bristled the Provost. "Remember that Sir Edward Carson is a Member of Parliament for our College. And remember, too, that it will be a bad day for you and me if the Irishry really turn loyalist. You know what

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happened when the descendants of the early English settlers in Ireland went native, and became ‘Hiberniores Hibernis ipsis.’ And now there is a danger of a reversion to that state of things. Think of what will become of us if the Irish become ‘Anglores Anglis ipsis.’ We Anglo-Irish will no longer have a monopoly of loyalty and its perquisites then.”

“Do you think that our College revenues would suffer?”

“Who knows?” sighed the Provost. “But at any rate we who have always stood by the predominant partner in any issues between the sister islands——”

“Oh, I say, the whole Irish Party seems to be converging to-day on College Green. There’s John Dillon and John Redmond and his son, William Archer Redmond, and Captain Willie Redmond and Tom Kettle standing framed in the pillars of the ‘Old House.’ Isn’t it an omen? A symbol of coming events—a symbol of the day when the money-changers will be driven from the temple of Ireland’s freedom?”

“A symbol—an omen—did you say?” snapped the Provost. “A *tableau vivant* that I hope is as symbolical of the ultimate defeat of their designs as is the stereotyped motto on the leader page of the *Freeman’s Journal*. By the way, how do you interpret the symbolism of that motto, Joly?”

“Oh—the sunburst—the dawn of a new era for Ireland.”

“Yes, but the artist, with a truly Hibernian flair for blundering, has the sun rising in the west. You will observe if you look across that the columned façade of the ‘Old House’ looks east.”

“Now that you mention it, I see the absurdity of the artist’s conception,” said Professor Joly. “But there goes good old William Field past King Billy’s statue.

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He looks more like a poet than a butcher with his long grey hair."

"Yes, things are not what they seem. Old Marshall, the college steward here, looks more like a college don than you or me. You look like a bankrupt grocer, Joly, and they tell me I have the cut of an Irish parish priest. By the way, you know that old William Field swore many years ago that he would never have a hair-cut until Ireland got Home Rule."

"Well, I'm all for a settlement of this long-drawn-out squabble," said Professor Joly. "So I hope poor old William will soon cut his hair. But I say, Mahaffy, isn't that old Brayden, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, now with the gang outside the 'Old House.' And here comes the Bird Flanagan too. I wonder what they're up to?"

"I don't know what the Bird Flanagan is up to," replied the Provost. "Some devilment, I'll bet. He's a regular wag, that lad—a reincarnation of Father Healy, the parish priest of Little Bray. But the others, I expect, are on their way to the Rotunda to form a committee for raising a fund in aid of the Belgian refugees. The *Freeman's Journal* has got a subsidy from the War Office, and it's backing the recruiting movement for all it is worth. That's why that cunning Fenian Brayden is with the crowd. I have promised to attend the meeting. I must say, however, that I'm not particularly enthusiastic about helping the Belgians. From what I saw of them they seem very noisy and truculent exiles. Guinness's porter seems to go to their heads."

"Ah, but you must remember that these poor people have been driven out of their homes by the brutal aggression of the hordes of the Kaiser, and——"

"Now, not a word against the Kaiser, Joly. I was his guest some years ago in Berlin, and I must say that,

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with the exception of our own Edward VII, he was the most charming of all the European sovereigns I ever met. And, Joly, don’t forget that the member for the College, Sir Edward Carson, on returning six months ago to Belfast after his famous dinner with the Kaiser, said, apropos of the Home Rule Act: ‘If they still persist in putting this infamous Act on the statute book, history will repeat itself. We know a great Protestant king who will save us from the tyranny of Rome, as a great Protestant king did before.’ You recollect when Carson made that speech—Joly, don’t you?”

Joly chuckled.

“History would then be repeating itself on the Boyne. And by the way I wonder how many people are aware that after the Battle of the Boyne the Pope sent a message of congratulation to William of Orange.”

“My dear Joly, don’t talk nonsense. William was championing Protestantism, and——”

“Yes, but the diplomatic relations between the Pope and William of Orange were then very cordial, while there was a state of tension between the Vatican and Louis XIV, who backed James II.”

“Are you quite sure that you are not introducing some new facts of your own into history, Joly?”

“No, sir. If you come along with me now to the College library, I’ll——”

“I can’t, Joly. I have a few things to attend to before I go to that meeting about these wretched Belgians. Personally if I had my way I’d kick the whole bunch out of the country. I see lots of able-bodied young men among them. Why did they not stand their ground instead of flying over here and expecting Irishmen to go to Belgium to fight for them?”

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(2)

“Join an Irish Brigade to-day and avenge Belgium.”

The Provost of Trinity College had just reached the O'Connell Street end of O'Connell Bridge (*ci-devant* Westmoreland Bridge) when the dramatic gestures of an orator standing on an improvised platform of Guinness's porter barrels and planks on Bachelor's Walk arrested his attention. There was a guard of honour of National Volunteers surrounding the platform, and the orator's words were punctuated every now and then with loud and enthusiastic cheers from the enormous crowd that overspilled across the bridge-head and away down into Eden Quay. The members of the Pipers' Band of the O.T.C. of Trinity College, who had played the orator to the platform, were leaning against the windows of Keogh's public-house and popping in and out of its swing-doors.

Lost in reverie, the Provost surveyed the scene.

Ha! So an *entente cordiale* had been formed between Trinity College and the autochthonous Irish! Until a few weeks ago the alumni of the College had looked upon the Dubliners as pariahs. Occasionally they beat them up. It was like the battles between the townsmen and the gownsmen in the old English Universities. What year was it that the College boys had attacked the Lord Mayor's procession as it passed through College Green on Saint Patrick's Day? Dear me! Dear me! It was 1900. As long ago as that! One of the boys caught Tim Harrington, the Lord Mayor, a beauty with a rotten orange on the violet bulbous nose as he lolled back in his gimerack mediaeval coach of state.

And now the alumni of Protestant Trinity, that loyal

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imperial stronghold, were rubbing noses with the aborigines!

Capta Graecia ferum captorem cepit!

The Provost drew nearer to the fringe of the crowd and focused his eyes on the orator. He was a clergyman —a Roman Catholic clergyman. That much was obvious. Elbowing his way among the multitude with a vigour rather remarkable for his seventy-five years, he presently recognised the speaker as the Reverend Dr. Doherty, the administrator of the Pro-Cathedral in Marlborough Street.

The tumult and the cheering ceased. Then Dr. Doherty wheeled right round, and his hand floated with a rhetorical gesture towards Aston’s Quay across the Liffey, where along the embankment, just a few feet above the high-water mark clearly defined by a greasy, green saline lichen and tufts of sea-weed, a gigantic poster proclaimed in heavy red lettering on a green field: “Join an Irish Brigade to-day and avenge Belgium.”

The Provost followed the direction of the priest’s pointing finger. Simultaneously there arose another roar of applause, which ceased as the priest turned round again and motioned for silence.

“People of Dublin, just imagine how you would feel if the Huns came goose-stepping along the quays from the North Wall” (here his right hand shot out dramatically eastwards towards the mouth of the Liffey). “Just imagine that, and you will realise how the towns and cities of poor little Catholic Belgium have suffered. Just imagine how you would feel if the Huns outraged the privacy and sanctity of your convents and treated your Irish nuns as they have treated the good Belgian sisters. Would you like to see them hacking the hands off your little children as they did to the poor little babies in Belgium?

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“Dearly beloved—I mean, citizens of Dublin—you have heard how the mayors of Belgian towns were shot in cold blood by these brutal Huns. Do you think they would spare our own beloved Lord Mayor?” (Loud applause and shouts of, “Up, Lorcan Sherlock.”) “Do you think they would have any mercy on him and the other members of the Dublin Corporation who had the public spirit and patriotism to strike the name of Professor Kuno Meyer” (a tornado of boos) “off the roll of freedom of the city. Thank God, that Hun, who was no doubt collecting information for the Kaiser while he was ostensibly teaching Irish in Liverpool University, has gone back to fight for the Fatherland. But I’ll stop speaking now for a few minutes, as I hear the York Street Workmen’s Band coming along, playing another contingent of our gallant Dublin Fusiliers to the North Wall. These men are going across the sea to avenge Belgium; to avenge the violation of Belgium’s neutrality; to——”

“What about the violation of the Treaty of Limerick?” cut in a voice from the crowd.

Immediately there was a chorus of angry protests against the interrupter: “He’s a Sinn Feiner!” “He’s a German spy!” “Hand him over to the polis!” “What’s the polis doing?”

The crowd swayed to and fro, and something like a Rugby scrum seemed to be seething in its core. Dr. Doherty gesticulated frantically with his arms, but his voice was drowned in the babel of angry protest. The Provost regretted the curiosity which had prompted him to plunge so far into the crowd, and nervously started to edge his way back to the pavement.

“Hold on to him, and give him over to the polis!” yelled a harridan beside him who reeked of stale porter.

The Provost was dumbfounded by this demonstra-

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tion of a complete revolution of the attitude of the Dubliners towards the police. Had the traditional antagonism between the aborigines and the Law as doled out by the predominant partner ceased for good—an antagonism so bitter that the rural police—the R.I.C.—were armed with rifles and bayonets, while the members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police were men of gigantic stature, ever on the alert for outbursts of disorder and disloyal demonstrations? And now these very Dubliners wanted to hand over a heckler to the police, did they? Such an attitude was a repudiation of the criminological ethics of the *Playboy of the Western World*. Why, it seemed only a few years ago since James Lynchhaun, the outlaw, had escaped from the police in West Mayo, and had been concealed for months and months by the people. And then when he was captured and got a long stretch of penal servitude, he escaped from Maryborough Gaol and got away to America, despite the vigilance of the police both in Ireland and in England. Not only that, but it was said that he joined the police force in Manchester while the hue-and-cry for him was in full blast, and was going about the country armed with a warrant for his own arrest. Aye, and had he not returned from America to Ireland recently, just after the outbreak of the war? And was it not said that he went about quite openly in Achill, and that the authorities had deliberately turned a benevolently blind eye on his movements? Well, well! Perhaps one of these days he might make a dramatic appearance beside the Reverend Dr. Doherty and appeal to the people "to join an Irish Brigade to-day and avenge Belgium." Colonel Lynch, who was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey for helping the Boers with his "Irish Brigade," was now urging the wild men of Clare to join the British Army. But, come to think of it, after all, a

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cut-throat like Lynchehaun was the type of man that might do good work in the trenches. The Irish were good fighters—the ideal men for tackling the Germans. But Kitchener was right. They must be officered by Englishmen.

The Provost, yielding to the pressure of the circumference of the crowd, which was rapidly expanding in reaction to the Rugby scrum in its centre, painfully climbed the kerbstone of the side-walk. From this point of vantage he surveyed the core of the seething vortex which eddied hither and thither, and eventually reached the fringe of the swaying mass. Then suddenly a youth, hatless, his clothes in tatters, his face bleeding, darted out of the whirlpool of humanity, and nearly cannoned into the Provost in his panic flight towards O'Connell Street. Just before rounding the plinth of the O'Connell statue, the fugitive abruptly wheeled round, and shaking his fist at the crowd, yelled: "Up the Kayser!"

(3)

"Our Women have been splendid."

"That man's a German spy! I know him!" yelled a drab-looking young slut who was standing next to the Provost.

"G'long, Mary Ellen! It's codding yez are," chuckled a blowsy elderly woman, dressed in a greasy moth-eaten black-beaded dolman reminiscent of the pre-Boer War era and a black bonnet with three truncated feathers awry. "Have a suppeen of this."

She produced a quart jug of foaming porter from under her dolman. The younger woman grabbed the vessel, and raising it to her lips, drank long and lustily.

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Then with a sigh of satisfaction she handed back the jug to the old woman.

"It's late in the day mebbe to be praying that you might never die in childbirth, Mrs. Cassidy, mam, but may himself and the chisellers come back safe from the wars. I was middling droughy, mam, and that's grand creamy porter."

"It's from Keogh's beyond, Mary Ellen," said Mrs. Cassidy. "Keogh's pulls the best pint in Dublin. But, Mary Ellen, how do you know that that lad is a spy—the lad that went leppin' in tatters out of the crowd?"

"Don't I know him, Mrs. Cassidy, mam? All them Sinn Feiners is spics, and they're all for the Kayser. I seen him in Larry O'Rourke's and him reading the *Rebel's Weekly*—the dirty rag that was oppressed by the polis yesterday and the printers took away in the Black Maria. And them stepping into the Black Maria and all the crowd gave them a shocking malevoging."

"Oh, the dirty scut, Mary Ellen. 'Tis the devil's own pity the crowd didn't massacree him. And do you know what, Mary Ellen, it's just dirty begrudging spite against me and you and the likes of us who has the separation allowance that makes them say they're for the Kayser."

"Well, anyways, isn't it grand to hear Father Doherty—they say he's a doctor too, and can cure soul and body—isn't it grand to hear him shaming all the scum of the city into fighting for the poor little Belgiums—the creatures? The priests is against the Kayser, Mrs. Cassidy, mam."

"All the circular priests, like Father Doherty, that darling man, is for the war, Mary Ellen, and it's only a few men from the orders is for the Kayser, priests like the Abbot of the Nasturtium monks in Mount Melleray. Them's the priests that take an oath on joining the order never to open their mouths until Ireland gets

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Home Rule. It's like William Field swearing that he wouldn't get his hair cut till we had Home Rule."

"Well, Mrs. Cassidy, mam, isn't it you that's the knowledgeable woman in theology? But why wouldn't the priests be for the war, and the farmers getting forty pounds for a bullock wouldn't sell for six pounds a month ago? And you and me and the likes of us that has husbands and sons getting the separation allowance, and us able to take our sup of porter at our ease and read in the papers the grand news about the bloody wars is goin' on in Europe, and Berlin and Paris and them other foreign parts?"

"But, wait till I tell you, Mary Ellen. Didn't I hear one of them young college-bred soldiers in Keogh's just a minute ago saying that he heard one of the professors say that he read in the papers to-day that there was over two thousand Irishmen already killed in the wars?"

"Do you tell me, Mrs. Cassidy, mam?"

"Well, Mary Ellen, that I may never stir if I didn't hear him with me own two ears, and John Joe pulling the quart for me! He was a smart-looking young man, and him tapping a kettledrum and him telling the news. Musha, now, isn't it a grand thing to be able to read in the printed papers all about the big battles across the water? And even if some of them gets hurted or killed itself, isn't it the grand glory for our men to take part in them great goings-on? But, Mary Ellen, what do you think of the old Pope, and him praying for peace, and us gettin' on game ball? It's enough to make any Catlic turn and go over to Ned Carson. He doesn't want no peace."

"Glory be to God, Mrs. Cassidy, mam, and sure you don't mean to say that the Holy Father said that?"

"Didn't you hear Father Doherty and him readin' the Pope's prayer for peace just after the Short Twelve

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on Sunday? Or do you tell me you didn’t get mass at all last Sunday, Mary Ellen? The priests read it out after every mass in every church in the world last Sunday.”

“Not telling you a lie, Mrs. Cassidy, I had a terrible brash and a reelin’ in me head last Sunday by dint of half a dozen pints of porter I had the night before, celebrating the separation money. But I’m sure that when the Pope reads in the newspapers in Rome that grand recruiting speech that Father Doherty is after making he won’t pray for no more peace. I thought that was grand when he said that he would like to ask them Sinn Feiners what they would do if the Huns done on their own sisters what they done on the women of the Belgiums.”

“Musha, God forgive you, Mary Ellen, sure the most of them Sinn Feiners doesn’t know who their own father is—let alone their own sisters.”

As the Provost involuntarily glanced at the two slatternly women who were discussing the international situation on the sidewalk, it suddenly occurred to him that he had seen the younger of the two, Mary Ellen, somewhere before, and that quite recently. Now where was it, he wondered. Oh, it didn’t really matter. Just vague curiosity.

“Nice soft morning, your worship,” came the languid drawl of a lean loose-jointed, flat-footed Hercules in rough brown tweeds and bowler hat, with a beetroot complexion, mustard-coloured hair, a loose sagging mouth and drooping shoulders, who suddenly loomed up before the Provost. It was Sergeant Johnny Barton, one of the “G” men, as the members of the detective section of the Dublin Metropolitan Police were called. He was nearly six-feet-six in height—an outsize even among the mammoth D.M.P. who passed away with the British régime in Ireland.

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Johnny Barton was now saluting the Very Rev. John Pentland Mahaffy, not in his rôle as Provost of Trinity College, but in his rôle as Justice of the Peace for County Dublin. Mahaffy had a beautiful country residence on Howth Hill as well as his official residence, "The Provost's House," in Trinity College, and invariably made a point of taking his seat at the Howth Petty Sessions.

"Oh, good-morning, Barton! How are you? What's the matter with your hand, by the way?"

Johnny Barton gazed sheepishly at his bandaged hand, while his beetroot complexion deepened in tone.

"A lady bit me, your worship," came his almost inaudible reply.

"What? A lady bit you—a lady, did you say? Not exactly a very ladylike gesture—eh, Barton?"

Johnny Barton's flat feet shuffled uneasily. His undertone dropped almost to a *sotto voce*.

"Well, your worship, mebbe you wouldn't exactly call her a lady. She belonged to the unfortunate class, your worship. I caught her soliciting the people who was taking a Sunday stroll for the good of their health on the heath on Howth Head. To bite me she done when I arrested her. Do you see them two women there—the old one with the cloak and the jug of porter and the young one? Well, 'twas the young one done it. Mary Ellen O'Rourke is her name. The old one with her is Mrs. Cassidy. She used to belong to the unfortunate class too, your worship—only, savin' your presence, she's past her work now."

The Provost glanced again at the two women who were still discussing the probable repercussions of Dr. Doherty's recruiting speech on the attitude of the Vatican towards the war.

"I say, Barton, I'm sure I saw the younger woman

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recently, and in a very distressing predicament, too. Now, where was it?”

“That’s right, your worship. You seen her when she was before you at the last Howth Petty Sessions. I had her up before you for soliciting, and you let her off with a caution because she pleaded that she was starving by dint of the separation allowance for her husband being delayed.”

“Was that after she had bitten you?”

“Twas, your worship.”

“But why did you not mention that fact, Barton? I would certainly have fined her heavily or—no, I would have sent her to prison without the option of a fine.”

“Well, your worship, I hadn’t the heart to put in a hard word against her. No more had the station sergeant and her after biting him up at the station in the seat of the pants, nor another constable whose nose she destroyed and him going to be married next day, nor another fine upstanding young constable who she hit a powerful larrup behind the butt of the lug with his own baton. Bothered in the head he is ever since, and I’mafeared he is going simple. Not the faintest notion he has who hit him or what hit him. The last I seen of him to-day he was trying to read the *Freeman’s Journal* upside down.”

“As good a way as any for reading that Fenian rag, Barton.”

(4)

“It’s a Long Way to Tipperary.”

The blare of the strains of the York Street Workmen’s Band playing “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” became

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louder and more insistent, while a community of ships' sirens in the harbour rendered a voluminous and rau-
cous accompaniment to the music. Presently the crowd surrounding Dr. Doherty's platform divided before the advancing band and the regiment in its wake, like the waters of the Liffey dividing before a fleet of Guinness's porter-barges, and washed on to the side-walk. The crowd cheered vociferously and joined lustily in the strains of "Tipperary." Several women stepped out proudly alongside the marching soldiers, and carried the rifles of their husbands, fathers, sons and sweethearts.

"'Tis a grand song is 'Tipperary' surely, your worship," said Johnny Barton. "There's a grand swing to it for men to march to battle."

"That's true, Barton—that's true."

The din of the band, sirens, yelling and cheering multitude and clatter of soldiers' boots on Dublin's cobble-stone pavements made further converse impossible. The Provost's mind drifted hither and thither on a tumultuous sea of random fancies. Yes, there was "a grand swing" to Tipperary, as Barton said. That is, there was a grand swing to the lilting tune. But the words were supremely idiotic. It was funny how a bit of doggerel whose first stanza opened with an outrageous Irish bull should have evolved overnight into a British military anthem. How was it it began? Oh, yes:

"Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly O,
Saying if you don't receive it, will you write and let me
know?"

"'Twas a Sligo poet by the name of Yeats that wrote that song, I'm told," shouted Johnny Barton above the babel of noises.

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The Provost shot him a look of amused bewilderment.
“Yeats? Did you say Yeats?”

“Mebbe you never heard tell of him, your worship. He’s a near friend—a second cousin, or mebbe ‘tis three akin to the Pollexfens, the big Sligo flour people. I’m sure your worship must know the Pollexfens. Well, this poet Yeats is——”

“No, Barton, I don’t know the Pollexfens,” interrupted the Provost. “But I do know Mr. Yeats. Politically he is a sort of academical or parlour Fenian, but he is a great poet. Perhaps he and my friend D’Annunzio, the Italian poet, are the greatest living masters of the art of verse. And let me tell you this, Barton, Mr. Yeats did not write ‘Tipperary.’”

“Well, now, your worship, isn’t Darby the Drouth the horrible liar? He swore his Bible oath that Yeats wrote ‘Tipperary’ and ‘The Night before Larry was Stretched.’ And by the same token Darby the Drouth doesn’t think Yeats any great shakes of a poet.”

The Provost burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

“I’m afraid this Darby the Drouth is an encyclopaedia of inaccurate information, Barton,” he said as soon as he recovered his composure. “As well as I can recollect, ‘The Night before Larry was Stretched,’ an old Dublin ballad, was saved for the nation in the writings of the Reverend Francis O’Mahony, an ex-Jesuit, better known as Father Prout. I recollect seeing the ballad in a book called *Father Prout’s Reliques*. As a specimen of Dublin slang of bygone days it has a certain value.”

“Well, do you tell me, your worship? Well, wait now till I get a hold of Darby the Drouth, for him to make the show of the world of me with his lies! I’m looking for him, anyways, for him to have led the scrub that raided the German pork-butcher’s shop last night.”

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“Who is this Darby the Drouth, Barton?”

“A knowledgeable tramp-tinker, he is, your worship. His real name is Darby Donnellan. They call him Darby the Drouth by dint of the power of drink he can lower. A shocking rowdy and a common thief he is, your worship, but he is the smartest penny poet in Ireland, and he made some of the songs he sings at fairs and patterns and race-meetings and cock-fights. And he sings a song was wrote by his own great-grandfather that was hung fornint the people in Castlebar for sheep-stealing. And that song was wrote by his own great-grandfather the night before he was hung has been handed down among the breed of the Donnellans, although not one of them could read or write barring Darby the Drouth himself. Aye, begob, Darby’s own great-grandfather wrote that song, and him waiting in the death-cell in Castlebar to have his thrapple drew.”

“Now that’s very interesting to me, Barton. You see I’ve lectured and written quite a lot on the much-disputed point whether Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were handed down orally or not through several generations of rhapsodists before the invention of the art of writing. Well, if the words of a ballad could be handed down accurately without the aid of writing through four generations, there is no reason why they could not be handed down for ten generations. I’d like to have a chat with this tinker later on, Barton. By the way, you said he wrote some ballads himself, did you not? Maybe we are on the track of another ‘Blind Raftery.’ Can you remember anything original that Donnellan wrote?”

Johnny Barton scratched his head ruminatively. “There was one grand song he wrote about James Lynchéhaun, the wild lepping Mayo man who very near caused a big war between the United States and

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England by dint of the Yankees refusing to extradite him when two members of the R.I.C. went across the sea to arrest him. I only mind the first two lines of it:

‘My name it is James Lynchehaun, a son of Granuaille,
In spite of all the peelers I escaped from Maryborough
gaol.’”

“By the way, Barton, is it true that Lynchehaun has returned from America?”

“Now, your worship, well the way is that it could be that mebbe he did come back. But let us whisht, your worship, till we hear what his reverence is going to say now. See, he has raised his hand to make the crowd keep quiet. The musicians and the soldiers has passed, only them ships’ sirens is still blowing, but he has a powerful voice won’t be drownded by them.”

“People of Dublin,” went on Dr. Doherty, “I want now to appeal to you not to allow the very pardonable resentment which you feel against German spies in this country and the handful of misguided and irresponsible boys among us who sympathise with the Germans, to drive you to acts of violence. The police are well able to cope with the foreign foe lurking in our midst, and the miserable handful of tin soldiers who have broken away from the National Volunteers, and also with the so-called ‘Citizen Army’ of Communist cut-throats. The police can scatter the ‘Citizen Army’ with one baton charge.” (Loud cheers.)

“People of Dublin, I greatly regret that some of you were so exasperated a few minutes ago by the ignorant remarks of a youthful heckler that he was in grave peril of being lynched. I implore of you not to let me hear a repetition of such incidents. I also sincerely hope that we shall not have a repetition of the disgraceful scenes that occurred last night when Ludendorff’s pork-shop

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in Camden Street was wrecked and its contents hurled into the street. Mr. Ludendorff, though of German birth, has been in Dublin for twenty years, and has a son in the British Navy, and I greatly regret that some of those who participated in the wrecking were soldiers in uniform." (Shouts of "What about the poor Belgians?" —"To hell with the Kayser and the Citizen Army!") "Now, people of Dublin, I beg of you to restrain your very natural indignation over the vandalism and brutality of the Hun hordes who have overrun Belgium. Do not copy the methods of those German vandals. The best way our young Dubliners can adopt in order to avenge Belgium and in order to fight for the rights of small nations, including our beloved little island, is to queue up behind the long lines of gallant youths who are at this moment standing patiently outside our recruiting depots in Dublin. Join an Irish Brigade to-day and avenge Belgium!"

"One word more. Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, is to address a recruiting meeting to-night at the Mansion House. You will recollect that he visited our capital two years ago in order to address the monster Home Rule meeting which was held in O'Connell Street. Incidentally it is remarkable that Mr. Asquith was the first British Premier to visit our shores. I understand that the 'Citizen Army'" (a tornado of boos) "have threatened that they will not allow him to reach the Mansion House. I have been told that some of the good women of Dublin whose husbands and sons are fighting the Huns at this moment, have threatened to box the ears of these tin soldiers" (loud laughter) "and to throw them into the Liffey. I beg these patriotic women—worthy fellow-countrywomen of those brave Limerick ladies who with stones in their stockings thrashed Orange Billy's Huns out of their city over

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200 years ago—to leave the Citizen Army to the police. I shall now conclude by appealing once again to all the young men who are listening to me to ‘join an Irish brigade to-day and avenge Belgium.’” (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

The pipers’ band of the O.T.C. of Trinity College, looking very picturesque in their ancient Irish kilts, struck up, “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old,” and the crowd started to break up.

“Begging your worship’s pardon,” said Johnny Barton, as the Provost and himself moved on, yielding to the pressure of the multitude in their rear, “it wasn’t love of Belgium, but love of pork that caused some of them blackguards to raid the German pork-shops last night. And I can tell you this much, your reverence, that some of them won’t have the time to finish the half-sides of bacon they stole before our lads lay them by the heels. There’s four of our best men on the hunt for the thieves who was seen clearing off down Camden Street with strings of sausages and legs of pork and rings of black pudding. But talk of the devil and he’ll appear! Here’s one of our men. Hello, Paddy! Any news?”

“Oh, there’s lots!” replied a tall, muscular, fiery-headed man in a Donegal homespun tweed suit, who, were it not for his enormous feet, which were larger and flatter than Johnny Barton’s, might have been called well-proportioned. “There’s lots,” he repeated, as his eyes wandered alternatively from Johnny to the Provost.

“Well, cough it up, Paddy. Don’t be making a song and dance about it,” snapped Barton.

“Well, to begin with, acting on information received I proceeded to the Camden Street end of Cuffe Street and charged the squinty-eyed bookie who does be

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taking bets at that corner with him having been seen appropriating one string of sausages——”

“Easy with your blather, Paddy, you’re not giving an official report now. Tell your story short.”

“Well, I gave him the usual caution, and he owned up that he picked up a string of sausages off Camden Street, after they had been dropped by Darby the Drouth——”

“Darby the Drouth!” cut in the Provost. “That’s the poet-tinker, isn’t it?”

“That’s him, your reverence. A sort of a spaldeen penny poet, roaring ballads at fairs.”

“Oh, Barton, if you catch him, I would like to have a chat with him—after he has served his sentence, of course.”

“I’ll arrange that, your worship,” replied Barton, scratching his head ruminatively.

“Did Darby the Drouth steal e’er a thing from your reverence?” asked Paddy deferentially.

“Oh, not at all. It’s just——”

“I know—I know, your worship,” cut in Johnny Barton. “I’ll explain it to Paddy after. Paddy’s head is rather bothered, and if you tell him anything it slips through a crack in his mind the next minute.”

Paddy’s face darkened.

“There’s no holding you, Sergeant Barton, since you got them stripes. But you haven’t no right to go insulting me in the presence of a holy priest.”

“The devil a stripe you’ll ever get, Paddy, you lepping loodhramaun. You won’t even be able to hold your own job as a rank and file ‘G’ man. You’ll find yourself back in uniform one of these days, pulling bowsies to the station, you Tipperary bog-trotter! Don’t you know, you raw savage, that the Lord Provost of Trinity College is not a priest, but a minister,

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and that he is a justice of the peace for the County of Dublin? His proper title is ‘your worship.’ ”

The Provost intervened with a deprecatory smile and gesture.

“Barton is over-punctilious,” he said. “Don’t take him too seriously. Now tell me, I’m interested in this Darby the Drouth. When was he last seen?”

“He was last seen, your rever—your worship—and him lepping before him down Camden Street, with them ropes of sausages hung round his neck like the Lord Mayor’s chain, and half a pig thrown over his shoulder and him yelling, ‘Up the Beljums!’ ”

“How do you know this? You only have it on hearsay?”

“According to information received from one of our spotters, your rever—your worship——”

“Didn’t I tell you to stop your official language, and tell your story straight out?” barked Barton, his temper rising.

“But isn’t his reveren—his worship—a magistrate of the County of Dublin,” protested Paddy in an aggrieved tone, “and amn’t I making a deposition before him?”

“You’re doing no such thing, Paddy, you omadhaun. The alleged offence was committed within the bounds of the city of Dublin and the Lord Provost of Trinity College is a magistrate for County Dublin. His sovereignty does not extend to the city of Dublin. Now off you go, you lepping lout, and find Darby the Drouth. And take three men to hold him down when you find him. Darby Donnellan is more clever both at breaking out of jail and evading arrest than Lynchehaun himself.”

“Oh, please tell me before you go,” said the Provost, “please tell me if you know whether Lynchehaun has returned to Ireland or not?”

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Paddy flushed crimson, and his eyes wandered furtively from the Provost to Johnny Barton.

“Now it could be that mebbe he did return.”

(5)

“*Sister Susie's sewing shirts for Soldiers.*”

“If you’re not in a terrible hurry, Barton, perhaps you’d walk with me just as far as Nelson’s Pillar. I’m on my way to a meeting in the Rotunda.”

“Tis an honour, so it is, your worship, for me to be seen in your company,” said Johnny Barton, as he tuned down his swinging stride to the age-lag of the Provost’s legs.

“I see a lot of young fellows going about in semi-military garb as well as in the full uniform of the National Volunteers, Barton, and I’m quite at a loss to know who they are. Some of them are loyal, and some of them are rebels, I understand.”

“Well, your worship, ‘tis this way it is. Let me see. All told now, there are, outside His Majesty’s forces in Dublin, four private armies, as you might call them. There are first, the ‘G.R.s.’”

“Yes, I know all about them. The ‘G.R.s.’ or the Methusaleers, as someone nicknamed them. They are, of course, officially recognised by the Government.”

“Aye, and then there are the National Volunteers (that’s Redmond’s volunteers). There’s lots of them has joined up in the Dublins and Connaughts and other Irish regiments. A grand body of men they are! And then there is a very miserable little army, known as the Irish Volunteers or John MacNeill’s Volunteers. Them are the lads that goes round talking about scuttling the British Navy with tin pikes. Well, anyhow, they are a

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very small section, and often 'tis how we do have to give them police protection to save them from being destroyed by the people of Dublin. And then there's them atheistical anarchists, the 'Citizen Army.' There's only about sixty of them all told. They want to set up a Communist Republic in Ireland, if you ever heard the like! They're a bloodthirsty, blackguardly lot, without any religion, always blaspheming God and the polis. It's a good thing that only half of them sixty has up-to-date rifles, and the other half has only old Italian rifles that Julius Caesar's soldiers used hundreds of years ago, and old Fenian horse-pistols. And some of them has old pikes and reaping-hooks and dung-forks. And some of them has old-fashioned bayonets and others has no bayonets at all—only carving knives. And begob, your worship, Jim Connolly has swore that he will man the streets leading to the Mansion House with them to-night, to prevent Mr. Asquith from speaking, but the National Volunteers and the D.M.P.s will be ready for them!"

"I hope so—I hope so, Barton. Despite the fact that Mr. Asquith has played so shamefully into the hands of the enemies of the Empire in order to keep himself and Lloyd George in office, I shall indeed be very sorry, now that he has come over on a recruiting mission, to see him insulted by these ruffians."

"It would be the world's pity, your worship. But there's a man coming towards us, now, a stocky man with a square chin and his lips tightly compressed. There he is now at the corner of Prince's Street. A man in civilian clothes and with a rifle on his shoulder."

"Oh, yes, that's Pearse—is it not? Patrick Pearse. I understand that he is at the head of the physical force movement. On one occasion he was announced to deliver a lecture at the College on some Irish subject—

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I forget what—but I refused to allow him to speak. However, he is a brilliant young man, I must admit. Oh yes, now I remember the subject he was to speak on. It was on Davis, the Fenian poet, who, I regret, was an alumnus of Trinity. But Pearse is clever—undoubtedly so."

"He is that, your worship. In our private records about him at the office he is marked down as 'a poet and a dramatist' as well as a schoolmaster and a journalist and a barrister. So he must be a deep, smart man."

"Look, Barton! What is the reason for all that commotion around Nelson's Pillar? Over there at the North Earl Street end!"

"Oh, begob, your worship, them are the Citizen Army coming along in their full strength of sixty from Liberty Hall. Isn't it the funny sight to see them having to get police protection? Do you see the constables walking in front of them and alongside them? Well, they're just seeing them past the gander. The fish-women around the Pillar always attacks them when they come round this way. Do you see that red-headed man with the squinty eye and him walking at the head of them with another man, your worship? Well, one of them fishwomen caught him a larrup with a codfish the other day, across the face and— Oh, beripes, your worship, do you hear the screeching and cursing of them women? Them women is that fierce they'd think nothing of clawing the eyes out of them. Aye, but see how the constables has got between the women and the Citizen Army. Now see them women trying to break through the police cordon—begob, and they'll get through, too!"

Johnny Barton's running commentary on the Citizen Army was drowned in a chorus of shrill, colourful

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feminine invective which showed that the Dublin fish-vendors could hold their own against the traditional luridness of epithet associated with their colleagues of Billingsgate.

"Right wheel!" shouted the squint-eyed N.C.O. as the Citizen Army swung down O'Connell Street.

"That red-headed lad with the squinty eye always puts the fear of God across me when I see him," said Johnny Barton; "a man like that with a twisted eye, your worship, 'tis the way he might shoot you dead in your standing and him not aiming at you at all. Well, your worship, I think 'tis how I'll walk behind them, fearing they might be attacked again at the bridge. I wouldn't put it past some of them lads was at his reverence's meeting to chuck the lot of them into the Liffey."

"Certainly, Barton, certainly. I think you are quite right. Good-day to you, Barton."

"Good-day, your worship."

The Provost stood for a moment to watch Johnny Barton fall in behind the Citizen Army, with its weird assortment of rifles, shot-guns, pitchforks and pikes.

Johnny Barton's normal gait was a sort of shuffling lurch, but as he walked behind the Citizen Army, his slovenly shuffle became more pronounced in contrast with the military precision of step of the rag-time host he was protecting. It was a deliberate gesture. He wanted to show that mentally, as well as physically, he was out of time with the Liberty Hall garrison. The Citizen Army had just reached the corner of Prince's Street when they struck up their marching ditty to the air of "Tipperary":

" 'Tis the wrong thing to crush the workers,
'Tis the wrong thing to do.
'Tis the right thing to hate the bosses,
And old Birrell and his crew.

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Onward, Workers' Union,
For ever we'll be true,
And we'll all join up behind Jim Larkin,
And the Red Flag Aboo!"

"Won't you buy a flag, Dr. Mahaffy?"

The Provost turned around abruptly, and saw a collection-box decorated with tiny flags which a pretty girl thrust forward towards him.

"Oh, it's you, Eileen, my dear," he beamed patriarchally. "So you've turned flag-seller now."

"Yes, Dr. Mahaffy. Mother insists that we must all do our bit. I'm also knitting socks for Colonel Moore's Comforts for the Connaught Rangers."

The Provost yawned, but still feigned a flabby interest in the girl's babble.

"Splendid, Eileen, splendid! And how is your father doing his bit—and your brothers——?"

"Oh, dad's in the G.R.s—he's too old to fight."

"Of course—of course, Eileen, I forgot. And Lionel?"

"Oh, he's in the G.R.s too."

"Rather young to be in the Methusaleers—isn't he, Eileen? Why doesn't he join up?"

"Oh, Sir Henry Wilson has promised to get him a job as an interpreter in Paris. And while he's waiting he likes popping around in uniform—just to be in the swing, you know. And he is also doing his bit by singing songs and giving recitations at concerts in aid of recruiting and war charities. He always selects war-songs and some of Kipling's barrack-room ballads and old Boer war songs. He's great at 'Trooper Johnny Ludlow,' 'The Bully Bullying Sergeant,' and 'Bravo, Dublin Fusiliers' and 'What do You think of the Irish now?' He brought down the house at the Rathmines Town Hall last night with his rendering of 'Hurrah for the Little Father'—that's a song about the Tsar—and 'When

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Belgium put the Kybosh on the Kaiser.' So he's doing his bit while he is waiting for his interpretship. Sir Henry Wilson has promised to get him the job. Sir Henry is a darling. Do you know him, Dr. Mahaffy?"

"Sir Henry is one of my very best friends, Eileen. It was he who, next to Sir Edward Carson, was mainly responsible for the 'Curragh Mutiny' which has saved Ulster for the Empire. And I understand that it was he who urged Kitchener to insist on English officers being put over the Irish brigades. And Sir Henry was right. It is a most rash thing to place native officers over native troops. Like all primitive peoples the Irish are magnificent fighters—excellent material for the rank and file. It is truly a gratifying sight to see the queues of young men outside the recruiting offices in Great Brunswick Street. Have you seen them, Eileen?"

"Rather, Dr. Mahaffy, I should say so! I saw a queue nearly a quarter of a mile long the other day. I never saw such queues before in my life—not even for Charlie Chaplin's latest film, 'The——' Oh! What's this the name of that film was? Doesn't matter. But talking about the crowds joining the colours—we Rathmines girls have been doing our bit too. We've been gingering up the slackers. We parade every evening from Portobello Bridge to Rathmines Town Hall, and we hold up every young man we see in mufti, and present him with a white feather! I'm sure we must have driven hundreds of slackers to the recruiting depots. Young Irishmen simply can't stand being accused of cowardice, Dr. Mahaffy. You should see all those strapping lads darting into the Church of the Immaculate Conception or into the grounds of St. Mary's College or into Kennedy's public-house, as soon as they see us coming along with the white feathers!"

"Yes, Eileen, I agree with you that the one thing an

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Irishman can't stand is being accused of cowardice. Physical courage is considered a *sine qua non* among all primitive peoples."

"I only know one man who didn't seem to mind when we handed him a white feather. That was Sheehy-Skeffington—you know him—the young man with the red whiskers."

"Oh yes, I know him. Himself and James Joyce during their student days brought out a pamphlet conjointly which caused quite a sensation. Well, you say he was not disconcerted by your white feather—is that so?"

"I should say that 'twas the other way about, Dr. Mahaffy. He bowed very courteously to us, and asked us to fix the feather carefully in his button-hole. And what do you think he said? 'My dear ladies, I gratefully accept this symbol of my fear of war. I fear war. I hate war and I love peace. And now will you hand me another white feather, because I want to pass it on to one who hates war and loves peace, as I do.' Well, Dr. Mahaffy, although we were dying with laughter, we handed him another white feather. We took him for mad. He bowed again to us, and said, 'I am going to place this other white feather on the high altar of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Jesus Christ, Our Lord, to whom I am going to present it, said, 'Blessed are the peace-makers'; and He also said, 'They who draw the sword shall perish by the sword.' And with that he bowed to us again, and walked straight into the church."

"Ah, my dear Eileen, that was all mere Jesuitical casuistry on the part of Sheehy-Skeffington. Neither himself nor Joyce can ever shake themselves free from the grip which the Jesuits laid on their mentality in Clongowes and the Catholic University. Mere casuistry,

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my dear Eileen, nothing more! Well, you certainly have been working overtime, doing your bit. But what about your youngest brother, Bertie? He should be about twenty-three now. Is he doing his bit?"

"Rather. He's in the Pipers' Band of the Trinity O.T.C."

"Oh, indeed! He won't do the Kaiser much harm in that capacity, will he, my dear Eileen?"

"Rather. I should say he would. The Pipers' Band attends the recruiting meetings, and—"

"Quite so—quite so, Eileen. I saw the Pipers' Band at Dr. Doherty's recruiting-meeting a few minutes ago. Well, au revoir, Eileen. Remember me to your father and mother—and— Oh, I forgot to take a flag from you. What is the flag-day for? There are rather too many of them following day after day."

"It's for the fund in aid of the distressed Belgian refugees."

The Provost sniffed.

"I'm sick of those awful Belgians. Very well, I'll take one, Eileen. And I'll give you five shillings towards Colonel Moore's fund for providing socks for the Connaught Rangers. I like Maurice Moore very much, but I hate his scurrilous brother George, the fellow who wrote *Hail and Farewell*. Have you read it, Eileen?"

"Not yet, Dr. Mahaffy, but Dad has read it. He says it's jolly good. I must get it from him. I'm dying to read it."

"Don't, Eileen, don't. He has ridiculed and insulted many dear friends of mine in it. He also made a fierce and unwarranted attack on me in the Press on one occasion, because I championed classical culture versus Gaelic barbarism."

The girl fixed the flag in the lapel of the Provost's coat.

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“Well, au revoir, Eileen.”

“Au revoir, Dr. Mahaffy.”

The Provost walked on towards the Rotunda, the “hither-and-thithering waters” of the tide of chaotic impressions of the incidents and conversations of the morning interclashing tumultuously through his mind like the backwash in the wake of Guinness’s porter-barges speeding down the Liffey. It was a tangled skein of broken filaments of hazy fancies, such as chase one another through the drowsy brain of a tired man, and react on one another during the twilight period between sleeping and waking.

Silly little girl, Eileen, with her atrocious cockney idioms! And she was born in Dublin, and had lived all her life in Dublin. And then that appalling Rathmines accent: “Wathmines” and “Twinity” and the “Kai-sah”! She pronounced “rather” as “wather” and she called Paris “Pawrus.” She and her stupid family did not think it refined to emphasise their vowels or liquids. Typical “Wathmines Cawtholic shoneens.” She came off second-best in her encounter with Sheehy-Skeffington. Plucky fellow, Sheehy-Skeffington, even though his whiskers and his knickerbockers were grotesque. Had the courage, like John Burns, to champion a forlorn cause. And peace was a forlorn cause, especially in Ireland. Socrates championed a forlorn cause, and was poisoned for his pains. Sheehy-Skeffington would very probably be shot or lynched some day. All the Irish were at present war-mad. Ninety-five per cent of them wanted to fight Germany, and five per cent wanted to fight England. The Citizen Army comprised a very small minority even of that five per cent. Wasn’t it droll to watch the detached way in which Sergeant Barton floundered along in their wake, ostentatiously dissociating himself from the tempo of their martial

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step and their marching-song? Ha! by the way, had he not heard that the Citizen Army had been cradled in 42 Trinity College in the rooms of the Reverend Robert Gwynn—the brother of Stephen Gwynn, the only Protestant in Redmond’s party?

Curious thing how both Barton and his colleague Paddy gave evasive replies to his direct questions regarding James Lynchéhaun! Official orders, no doubt. There was something secretive—jesuitically secretive—about these “G” men, as there was indeed about all the members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. They had a freemasonry of their own, like the Jesuits. And by the way, hadn’t the “Bird Flanagan” told him something about the Dublin Metropolitan Police belonging to the Third Order of Jesuits? Of course, the “Bird Flanagan” was a born playboy, and one never knew whether he was joking or talking seriously. And yet—and yet, why might there not be a Third Order of Jesuits, just as there was a Third Order of Franciscans? Well, at any rate, the “Bird Flanagan” assured him that such was the case, and actually brought him along to the Jesuit headquarters in Upper Gardiner Street, where he saw Sergeant Barton heading a host of D.M.P.s in by the hall-door of the colossal Jesuit presbytery which had a private entrance to Gardiner Street Church. They had a “sodality” or some form of a pow-wow there once a week—or was it once a month? Of course, the “Bird Flanagan” belonged to a good Roman Catholic family, and ought to know what he was talking about. But then again, you could not take the “Bird Flanagan” seriously. He didn’t take himself seriously. His name was legendary for practical jokes. Didn’t he ride a horse up the stairs of a Dublin hotel?

“*Coactus volui! Noblesse oblige!* The Lord Provost of Trinity College! *Ave!*”

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Suddenly startled from his reverie by these words uttered in a croaking falsetto, the Provost saw standing before him—in fact barring his further advance—a gaunt, red-faced, middle-aged man wearing a monocle, and dressed in a checked Inverness and a brown bowler hat with the word “Endymion” in gold lettering across the front of its band. In his right hand a gleaming sword was poised vertically, while in his left hand he held a battered-looking umbrella.

The venerable Provost had an agile and resourceful mind. Momentarily unnerved by the sight of the gleaming sword, brandished by Dublin’s “village idiot,” Cashell Boyle O’Connor Fitzmaurice Burke Stewart Tisdell Farrell, he promptly rose to the occasion.

“Ah, good-morning, Mr. Farrell. How are you to-day?”

“Very well, I thank you, my Lord Provost.”

“You may stand at ease, Mr. Farrell. Your position, besides being unnecessarily formal, must be exceedingly uncomfortable.”

“Thank you, my Lord Provost.”

And forthwith he lowered his sword, to the great relief of the Provost.

“Well, Mr. Farrell——”

“You must not call me ‘Mr. Farrell’ my Lord Provost. That is only my temporary terrestrial name, during my present, or ten thousandth incarnation. I am Endymion—the personification of the sun! And now, to plunge *in medias res*, my Lord Provost, in justice to myself, I must let the world know through the medium of the *Freeman’s Journal* that your deductions regarding Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Volume I of your Greek Classical Literature—to wit, the volume entitled *Epic and Lyric Poets*—are based on erroneous premises. Heyne, Wolf, Niebuhr, as well as that

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pedantic statesman, Gladstone, and yourself have been tilting at windmills, like Don Quixote. And shall I tell you why? Simply because nine hundred years before the birth of Christ I appeared in one of my human forms as Homer. I am Homer. In a later incarnation I became Julius Caesar, and wrote my war experiences in the book *De Bello Gallico*. I remember distinctly wading ashore at Dover at the head of my legions, and I can recall the gallant stand made by the naked, painted ancient Britons against the serried squares of my soldiers. Once more there arises before my eyes the picture of Winston Churchill, then a British matron, stoically nursing her fifteenth child beneath the shade of a gnarled oak tree, while she watched me cleave the skull of her mate with my *gladius*. And in the terrible moment of her bereavement I noticed, despite her welling tears, that look of triumph and relief that one always observes in the eyes of widows as they see their husbands die. And a little way off stood Lloyd George, in his then incarnation, a bookmaker, taking bets on the battle between Rome and Britain. I even remember the odds—ninepence to fourpence. All these minutiae of detail, my Lord Provost, in order, as Pooh Bah says in the *Mikado*, ‘to give an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative.’ But of this anon. Here comes Father Dineen, turning around Mooney’s corner near the Rotunda.”

He pointed to a lean stooping figure in faded clerical garb with a rather battered silk hat on the back of his head who was shuffling down O’Connell Street mumbling to himself.

“You may not be aware, my Lord Provost, that the Reverend P. S. Dineen, ex-Jesuit, and now a freelance secular priest, a spalpeen fanach soggarth, so to speak, is the reincarnation of another ex-Jesuit, Father

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Francis Mahony, alias Father Prout, the author of 'The Bells of Shandon.' I must have a word with him, as I am sure that, as one of the foremost Gaelic writers in this country, he will be interested to learn that in an incarnation many centuries ago, as a Cistercian monk, I wrote *The Yellow Book of Lecan*, *The Book of the Dun Cow*, and *The Book of Kells*. (The latter book has been in your College library for some centuries.) Now here comes Father Dineen, I must not miss him! So, my Lord Provost of Trinity College, Vale! Noblesse oblige! Coactus volui!"

Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Burke Stewart Tisdell Farrell again sprang to attention, and clicked his heels. His sword flashed aloft perpendicularly, then descended with a swift semi-circular sweep. Then he wheeled round and strode swiftly after the drab clerical figure that shuffled down O'Connell Street, keeping as close as possible to the walls of the houses.

Dazed and amused, the Provost watched him overtake the priest, who suddenly pulled up, obviously taken aback.

"Good-afternoon, your reverence—I mean your worship. I see Mad Farrell has been bothering you."

The Provost turned round to the speaker. It was Paddy, the detective, Sergeant Barton's colleague.

"Yes, the man is a pest. He should not be allowed to ramble around the streets with that naked sword. He is dangerously insane."

"Yerra, your worship, it is only when the moon is full that he is took that way. And then he goes lepping mad if you don't call him Endymion, and he says he is a nasturtium monk and that he wrote *The Book of Kells*. But barring when the moon is full he is a quiet harmless man would sit half a day over a pint in a snug in a public-house."

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“But, that sword! You fellows should take it from him at once.”

“So we did, your worship, but he cried so bitter that Johnny Barton, who has a heart as big as a cow, couldn’t bear it, and gave it back to him on condition that he got a scabbard or a sheath for it. And so Endymion wrapped it up in brown paper and twine, but after a bit the paper got wore through and the edge of the sword was exposed worse than ever. ’Tis afeared I am we’ll have to do something about it, your worship. And there he is now, bothering that poor holy priest, Father Dineen! Begob, but I’ll shift him this minute. Let him bother someone else. But, begging your worship’s pardon, you didn’t see e’er a sight since of Darby the Drouth—did you?”

“Darby the—what?”

“Darby Donnellan—popularly known as Darby the Drouth, your worship.”

“Oh, you mean the tinker-poet or ballad-singer, do you? I never laid eyes on him in my life. I just heard Sergeant Barton and yourself talking about him.”

“Well, your worship, I’m moidered looking for him.”

The Provost pulled out his watch.

“Well, I hope you’ll find him. I must hurry across to the Rotunda. I’m late as it is for this meeting. Oh, by the way, before I leave you. I want to know if there has been any further news about James Lynchheun?”

“There’s grand reading in the *Evening Herald* stop press, your worship, about a power of Germans was blew up by a mine—soldiers and horses and big Krupp guns and all!”

“Really? Really? Well, good afternoon.”

“Good afternoon, your worship.”

The Provost walked on chuckling to himself. Aha! So the “G” men had been ordered to adopt a hush-hush

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policy about the return to Ireland of that dreadful outlaw James Lynchehaun. Secretive, furtive, jesuitical fellows—these “G” men! After all, perhaps what the “Bird Flanagan” told him about the D.M.P. being the Third Order of Jesuits was a cold hard fact. And was it not singular how solicitous Paddy had been about getting “Mad Farrell” away from Father Dineen? Jesuit calling to Jesuit! Father Dineen was an ex-Jesuit, of course, but “once a priest, a priest for ever.” “*Tu es sacerdos in aeternum.*” Similar case to that of Father Prout. Both chafed against the iron discipline of the order—against the vow to become “*perinde ac cadaver.*” An orthodox, pious Catholic priest, he had devoted too much attention to his Irish studies, and so got expelled from the order. That brilliant young Jesuit, Father Boyd-Barrett, would probably walk the plank, too, one of these days for devoting too much time to psychoanalytical problems. Just wait and see. Wait and see? Oh, yes, that old rascal, Asquith, was to make a recruiting speech at the Mansion House in the evening. Redmond, the “dollar dictator,” would be there too. Perhaps he would also be at the Rotunda. He would make old “Wait and see” toe the line or kick him out of office.

(6)

*“Oh! we don’t want to lose you, but we think you ought to go,
For your King and your country both need you so!
We shall miss you, oh! so sadly, but with all our might and
main
We shall kiss you, hug you, cheer you when you come back
again.”*

Led by the “Bird Flanagan,” a large and enthusiastic audience, after joining with a crashing crescendo in the lines of “Oh! we don’t want to lose you,” had let

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itself rip in an avalanche of thunderous applause which vibrated through the Rotunda, just as the venerable and stately figure of the Provost of Trinity College loomed in the doorway.

“Welcome to our little hooley, Provost,” beamed the “Bird Flanagan” in his soft semi-adenoidal Dublin brogue. “And sure now, isn’t it gorgeous to see this fusion of all creeds and classes in Dublin for the noble cause of——”

“I’m sorry I’m rather late,” cut in the Provost, slightly nettled by the “Bird’s” affable gush. “I was held up on the way several times.”

“Oh, don’t apologise, Provost, don’t apologise! As a matter of fact, the meeting has been postponed because a message came along that the Lord Mayor won’t be able to attend, as he is busy making arrangements for the reception of Mr. Asquith to-night at the Mansion House. And he wants to make sure that the Sinn Feiners and the bowsies of the Citizen Army won’t insult Mr. Asquith.”

“If they pitched the old humbug into the Liffey I wouldn’t be sorry, Mr. Flanagan,” snapped the Provost.

“Ah, sure now, Provost, Mr. Asquith is one of the best—so he is. Sure bygones are bygones, and Sir Edward Carson and John Redmond have kissed and made it up. Sure they’re both Irish, and they’re both spoiling for a fight with the Germans. Now, there’s John Redmond’s brother, Willie Redmond the M.P. for Clare—look at him there in the corner talking with that long hank of misery, John Dillon! ‘The Melancholy Humbug,’ as Tim Healy called him. Well, my bold Willie has taken a commission, and he is going out as soon as he can to fight the Germans. And there’s John Redmond’s son talking to Tom Kettle. You see

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the two of them is in uniform too! They're having a great gawster with William Brayden of the *Freeman*. Sure all Tom Kettle is afraid of is that the war will be over by Christmas. Didn't Sir Henry Wilson say that it would be finished by spring, and he ought to know?"

"Sir Henry is a brilliant soldier—an exceptionally brilliant soldier, but I'm afraid, Mr. Flanagan, that Lord Kitchener's estimate of the duration of the war, as of at least three years, is more shrewd."

"Three years, begorra! Provost! Three years! The Russian steam-roller will have squashed the Germans flat before Christmas."

"The 'Russian steam-roller' was put out of action at Tannenberg by Hindenburg. Samsonoff is dead. They say he committed suicide. And Rennenkampf is on the run. Russia is beaten."

"I'll lay you a hundred to one, Provost——"

"I never bet," interrupted the Provost icily.

"Well, Provost, it's just a manner of speaking. What I wanted to convey is that Rennenkampf did not get the knockout at Tannenberg, and he'll be in on his feet again before he is counted out. That's a tip straight from the horse's mouth and you can put your shirt on it, Provost."

"Really, Mr. Flanagan, your metaphors from the race-course and the boxing-ring convey nothing to me whatsoever. But if you mean to imply that the Russians will save the Allies from Germany, you are making a very grievous miscalculation."

"Well, if you don't believe me, Provost, you can ask a professional soldier—Tom Kettle himself. He is over there. I'll call him, and——"

The Provost raised surprised eyebrows.

"Kettle a professional soldier?"

"Isn't he a lieutenant in the Dublins? See him over

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there in uniform, and fine he looks in it too. Well, he says that the Russians deliberately fell back at Tannenberg.”

The Provost smiled wryly.

“The steam-roller reversed—eh, Mr. Flanagan?”

“Aye—that’s it, Provost. And do you know why? Because several divisions went up to Archangel, and they shipped from there to the North of Scotland. Didn’t Tom Kettle see with his own eyes long express trains tearing like mad with blinds drawn to the south of England?”

“If the blinds were drawn, how did he know that there were Russian troops in these trains?”

“The blinds were drawn for fear German spies would blow the gaff to the Kayser. Isn’t England riddled with German spies? There are German spies even in Dublin too. Only a few minutes ago, I’m told, a German spy was caught taking notes of Doctor Doherty’s recruiting speech on Bachelor’s Walk. And when the crowd went to lynch him, didn’t he draw a revolver? But they took it from him—one of the German pattern, too! He put up a big fight against the crowd, I’m told, and kept shouting ‘Up the Kayser!’ until in the long run they threw him over the parapet into the Liffey.”

“Was he drowned?”

“What the devil—— Excuse, Provost. Who cares whether he was drowned or not? Oh! Bejapers! Look, Provost, here’s old Skeffy coming along—and begob, he’s wearing a white feather. Hello, Skeffy!”

Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, red-whiskered, knickerbockered, stood framed in the doorway, and cast blandly benevolent, enquiring glances around the room. Then he saw the “Bird Flanagan” beckoning to him.

“Hello, Flanagan. Good-day, Provost.”

The Provost of Trinity bowed gravely.

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"A present from a mott, Skeffy!" chaffed "The Bird," pointing to the white feather.

"Yes, Flanagan."

The "Bird" measured him from head to foot with a scornful glance.

"Well, isn't it a nice disgrace to see an Irishman owning up that he is afraid to fight? What will your brother-in-law, Tom Kettle, say when he sees you?"

A pensive Buddhistic smile gleamed wanly on Sheehy-Skeffington's face.

"Tom knows I'm a man of peace."

"Well, if you're a man of peace, what the bloody—Excuse me, Provost. What do you mean by sticking your nose in here? We don't want peace—we want war—bloody war—so we do!"

"The purpose of this meeting is to assist the victims of war—not to assist in the waging of war."

"Skeffy, you're not a man at all—let alone an Irishman; you're an old woman!"

Sheehy-Skeffington stroked his beard ruminatively. "Our ancient poets visualised Ireland as an old woman—as a little old woman—Kathleen na Houlihan. But, by the way, Flanagan, as you are so enthusiastic about the war, why don't you act up to your convictions and join up? You're young enough to fight."

"Aye, I'm young enough to fight, and would ask nothing better than to have a crack at the old Kayser. I tried to join up several times, but every time the doctors turned me down, and so all I can do now is to help as best I can with any war charities going in Dublin."

"Ah, I see, Mr. Flanagan," interposed the Provost. "So you are trying to do your bit in any way open to you. Splendid, indeed, Mr. Flanagan!"

"Talking about your doing your bit, Flanagan," said

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Sheehy-Skeffington, "that book of yours, the proceeds of which are to go to the fund for the Belgian refugees, was a masterpiece!"

"What?" said the Provost, with a quizzical smile. "So Mr. Flanagan has also been smitten by the cacoethes scribendi, has he?"

"He has indeed, Provost. And as I said, it's a masterpiece!"

"What is the title of his work?"

"A very topical one, Provost, *What I Think of the Kaiser*, by 'the Bird Flanagan,' and never did I see such a terse, cogent and conclusive expression of opinion. Unfortunately you are not allowed to browse on the book before buying it, because there is a sealed wrapper round every copy of it."

"Not a bad idea at all," commented the Provost. "Only that it means that one is, so to speak, buying a pig in a poke."

"Exactly, and then the price is rather high for the slimness of the volume in Mr. Flanagan's case. How much is it, by the way, Flanagan?"

"Five shillings. And selling like hot cakes."

"It must be an astonishingly good book, then," said the Provost.

"I don't think that it is the merit of the book that has caused the boom," put in the "Bird" in a deprecatory tone. "It's the fact that the proceeds go to the fund for the relief of distressed Belgian refugees. I must say, however, that my handling of my theme is very original, even if it's myself that says it."

"But what is the book about? The war? The sufferings of the refugees?"

"When you break the seal," replied Sheehy-Skeffington, "you find nothing but a lot of blank pages. It's just a dummy book! There's nothing inside. Nothing at all!"

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And that is what the 'Bird Flanagan' thinks of the Kaiser. See the point, Professor Mahaffy? He thinks nothing of the Kaiser!"

"I see the point," replied the Provost. "It is rather a crude practical joke on the purchaser of the book, however."

"But 'The Bird' makes nothing out of it," expostulated Sheehy-Skeffington. "The proceeds go to a charitable purpose."

Doing evil that good might ensue was one of the principles of the ethical code of the Jesuits, the Provost mused, and the "Bird Flanagan" had been taught by the Jesuits. Wasn't it the "Bird Flanagan" who had told him that the Dublin Metropolitan Police belonged to the Third Order of Jesuits? The more he thought about it, the more he felt inclined to believe that the "Bird" had not been merely joking when he imparted the information to him. Why had the Jesuits been expelled from several continental states? Simply because they sought to extend their power by furtive and devious ways among various influential sections of the community. They got a hold of young Irishmen in their childhood, and they never relaxed their iron grip on their souls. James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* showed that plainly.

When one belonged to the Englishry, which was synonymous with the Protestant minority in Ireland, one was as completely cut off from the natives—the Irishry—as if one belonged to a different planet. If one was born a Protestant one was automatically a loyalist—if one was born a Catholic one was—*ipso facto*—a rebel. Protestant and Englishman were virtually convertible terms. Curious illustration of this fact was the gaelicising of Protestant Row in accordance with the bilingual scheme of the Dublin Corporation. The Irish for

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Protestant was “Sassenach,” meaning “Saxon.” And so over the name “Protestant Row” at the corner of that mouldy little lane “Srad na Sassenach” had been inscribed in Gaelic letters. Strange how the two races—the Irishry and the Englishry—had never really commingled. It was like the Jews and the Gentiles throughout the world. All the better, too, that the Englishry did not fuse with the natives. The Eurasian problem was bad enough for the Empire without an Anglo-Hibernian one developing.

When the Englishry in Ireland “went native” it was generally—but not always—the result of intermarrying with the aborigines. There were the cases of Yeats and Douglas Hyde, who, although they did not pollute the Nordic strain of their forefathers by forming alliances with the natives, had “gone native.” Yeats had been bewitched by the Gaelic spooks and fairies, and Douglas Hyde had succumbed to the magic charm of the Gaelic language. Then there was Sir Roger Casement, who after an honourable career as a British official under three sovereigns, had thrown in his lot with the Irish intransigents, and was now in America fulminating against Irishmen joining the British army. Who knew what his end would be? Perhaps, like Robert Emmet, he would die on the gallows. Emmet, an alumnus of Trinity College, and a member of the Englishry, had been executed within view of the College gates. He had fallen a victim to the fatal lure of Kathleen na Houlihan. And it was regrettable that there were several promising young men in Trinity who would probably be lost to the Empire owing to the virus of the so-called Gaelic Revival. Gaelic Revival, indeed! A phantasm—a mirage—a will-o’-the-wisp! And had not the first meeting of the committee of the Citizen Army been held in Trinity College? What a disgrace to the College!

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The hopelessness of the outlook for anyone who went native was poignantly illustrated in the case of Lafcadio Hearn, who became so fascinated by Japanese culture that he actually took out Japanese citizenship and even adopted Japanese clothing. He died a lonely death, ostracised by the Japanese, and an outcast from his own people.

A yawn from the "Bird Flanagan" cut short his reverie.

"I don't see much sense in hanging about here any longer, Provost. All these fellows are just gawstering. I'm going to grease for the Catholic Club. I'm hoping to meet a couple of my butties there. I feel in fine form for a game of billiards if I can get a partner."

The Provost glanced at his watch.

"It's after three. As you say, there's not much sense in staying here any longer. I suppose we can slip out quietly, Mr. Flanagan."

"Certainly, Provost. There's no formality about it. The whole thing is a wash-out for to-day."

The Provost produced his snuff-box.

"Dear me! dear me! what a terrible disappointment! It's empty," he said with a wry smile. "Is there a tobacconist's shop anywhere about here—one that sells snuff?"

"There's a fine shop just across the street, run by Tom Clarke, an old Fenian who was out in the '67 rising. But maybe you don't want to go there. Not that Tom wants to shove his Fenianism on anybody. Tom's one of the best."

"Oh, I don't mind his Fenianism, so long as he does not try to force his political creed on me. Where exactly is his shop?"

"When you leave the Rotunda, Provost, you just turn left and cross the street to the National Bank.

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Then on the other side of Great Britain Street right opposite the bank is Tom Clarke's shop. You can't miss it. In fact you can see it from the door of this building."

"Thank you, Mr. Flanagan. Good-afternoon."

"Good-afternoon, Provost."

(7)

*“Cassidy, Private Michael Cassidy,
He's of Irish nationality,
He's the boy of wonderful audacity,
Private Michael Cassidy, V.C.”*

The Provost of Trinity College, acting on the "Bird Flanagan's" directions, had just crossed over to the south side of Great Britain Street, and was about to step into Tom Clarke's shop when the strains of a military band caught his ear. Looking down O'Connell Street, he saw coming abreast of the Father Matthew statue, the Pipers' Band of the O.T.C. of Trinity College, followed by the entire corps itself, some two hundred strong, and including striplings, sturdy men in their thirties and a few men in the forties. The Provost bowed gravely in response to a salute from the adjutant of the corps, Major George Harris.

The band was playing "Cassidy," and the corps were lustily rendering the words of the song. Just as they came flush with the Parnell statue, they struck up the last stanza:

"The little children all adore him down in Donegal,
And with a piece of chalk they write his name upon the
wall,
And in the little village school upon the Sabbath day,
When teacher says 'Who made the world?' they all look
up and say:

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‘Cassidy, Private Michael Cassidy,
He’s of Irish nationality,
He’s the boy of wonderful audacity,
Private Michael Cassidy, V.C.’”

The people along the sidewalk cheered wildly as the marching men swung round the Parnell statue and into Rutland Square (now Parnell Square).

The significance of this new-born cordiality between England’s faithful garrison in Ireland and the aborigines caused uneasy qualms in the Provost’s mind for the second time within the space of an hour or so. The natives were undoubtedly making friendly noises to the garrison. That was all very well, but there was a danger that the natives might get out of hand and demand that “the Act which was safe on the statute book” might be put into force as soon as the war was over. The “dollar dictator” would see to it!

The last strains of the Pipers’ Band had barely died away when the Provost’s attention was attracted by a frenzied outburst of cheering which seemed to come from the direction of Nelson’s Pillar. Stepping round the corner, he saw that the viceregal cavalcade was proceeding northwards. Apparently the Viceroy had decided to return home by the North Circular Road. As the outriders came abreast of him, the Provost noticed that the multitude on the side-walks who waved their hats and cheered frenziedly as the King’s representative and his consort bowed and smiled again and again was made up of all types of Dublin’s citizens: workmen and their wives, shopkeepers, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, journalists, city fathers and civil servants.

The Provost’s observant eye was quick to take in the composition of the crowd. Among those who took part in an ovation inspired rather by enthusiasm for the

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cause of which the Viceroy was then a symbol than by any special regard for Lord Aberdeen himself, were many who, like the Provost himself, have passed away. They included Alderman Dr. MacWalter, Surgeon MacArdle, Surgeon Blayney; Canon Downey of St. Joseph's, Berkeley Street; Father Ridgeway, P.P. of the Star of the Sea, Sandymount; Father Waters, President of the Catholic University School, Upper Leeson Street; Seamus O'Kelly, editor of the *Dublin Weekly Post*; D. P. Moran, editor of the *Leader*; Henry Doig of the *Evening Mail*; James Winder Good of the *Freeman's Journal*; Cruise O'Brien of the *Irish Independent*; Jack Lynch of the *Sunday Independent*; and Signor Dennis Maginni, professor of dancing and deportment.

The Provost turned into Tom Clarke's shop, and, laying a half-crown on the counter, asked for an ounce of snuff. A bowed, elderly, tired man, grey-haired and gaunt, weighed the snuff in a small scales on the counter. The Provost observed him narrowly as he did so.

“Would you mind filling my snuff-box for me out of the ounce?” he said.

“Certainly I'll do so with pleasure, Father,” replied Tom Clarke quietly.

The Provost smiled.

“It's extraordinary how many people take me for a Roman Catholic priest.”

“But—” began Tom Clarke, looking at him with a vaguely curious glance. “But—”

“Do I really look like a priest?” went on the Provost banteringly.

“No—not when I look close at you. And now when I look still closer at you I know who you are. You are Dr. Mahaffy, the Provost of Trinity College. I know you from photographs I have seen of you in the papers.”

“You are a very observant man, Mr. Clarke—you are

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indeed! By the way, you are Mr. Clarke, I presume?"

"Yes, my name's Clarke. I hate newspapers, but I must read them to see what's going on."

"Talking about newspapers, I read a few days ago in one that James Lynchehaun had returned from America. I wonder if it's true?"

"Perfectly true. He's in Achill at present."

"Really? And is it not strange that the police seem to know nothing about him!"

"The police have been instructed to know nothing about him."

"But why?"

Tom Clarke shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose the Government wants to let bygones be bygones now that they think they have the people solidly behind them in the campaign against the Germans. And they don't want to look for trouble by rearresting Lynchehaun. It might react against recruiting."

"I understand that the young men of Ireland are joining up in their thousands, Mr. Clarke?"

Tom Clarke shrugged his shoulders once more.

"You are right about the briskness of recruiting at present. The Dublin people are war-mad just now. Why, only about an hour ago, I hear there was a German spy lynched while Father Doherty was addressing a recruiting meeting on Bachelor's Walk. And I'm told that several young men who tried to save the German spy were badly beaten up by the crowd and were taken to hospital. Three of them, they say, are not expected to live."

"That's curious, Mr. Clarke. I was present at that meeting—just by the merest chance—and apart from a heckler being badly mauled by the crowd, I saw no indication of any trouble. Well, I presume that you

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too, have buried the hatchet, Mr. Clarke, and that you are a loyal supporter of His Majesty’s forces like the vast majority of your fellow-countrymen. Am I right in my conjecture?”

Tom Clarke’s hollow cheeks flushed crimson, and there was a fiery gleam in his eye.

“I belong to the old Fenian generation, Dr. Mahaffy. I spent sixteen years of my life—the best years of my life—as a convict in British prisons for my services to my country, and as soon as I came out I resumed my work where I left off. I’m an old man now, but I still believe in physical force. I belong to the old I.R.B. which agreed to stand aside for a bit just to give Parnell a chance. When Parnell was betrayed by the canting English Liberals and Tim Healy’s gang, our organisation reverted to physical force. We have worked quietly and secretly from that day up to the present.”

“But why not give the constitutional movement just another chance, Mr. Clarke? After all, as Mr. Redmond has so often emphasised, ‘the Act is safe on the statute book’—is it not?”

“You know in your heart, Dr. Mahaffy, that, thanks to John Redmond’s weakness in not insisting that a measure which was merely ‘a Bill for the better government of Ireland’ should automatically be put into force, as, after having been three times thrown out by the Lords, it was signed by the King, an amending clause will be added to it after the war which will partition Ireland for good and all; that is, if the Allies win the war.”

“And if they don’t, Mr. Clarke?”

Tom Clarke’s face hardened.

“Then the Kaiser, your personal friend, and Sir Edward Carson’s, will prevent the Home Rule Bill from being put into force. We have not forgotten that

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the Kaiser plighted his word to Carson that if the worst came to the worst, he would save Ulster from Rome. I can see that I am giving you pain by my bluntness, Dr. Mahaffy, but it is better to be blunt and candid. You and Sir Edward Carson have won the fight. Asquith and Lloyd George and Churchill, who were kept in office for years by the 'dollar dictator,' have no further use for him except as a recruiting officer. The Curragh mutineers have won, and the man who caused Germany to come into the war will have his way."

"To whom are you referring, Mr. Clarke?"

"To Sir Edward Carson, the member for your College—'the lawyer with the Dublin accent' as Tom Kettle called him. Are you aware that Von Kühlmann informed the Kaiser some few months back that exhaustive enquiries in Ulster had convinced him that Great Britain was on the verge of civil war owing to the Home Rule Bill dispute, and would therefore be unable owing to domestic trouble to come to the aid of France if that country were attacked? And are you aware that Mr. Gerard, the late American ambassador in Berlin, stated in black and white that the Kaiser was extremely surprised when England took a hand in the war, as he had been informed that her hands would be too full with the Irish problem?"

"Yes, I have heard about Von Kühlmann's statement and Mr. Gerard's, but——"

"But you don't choose to believe them, Dr. Mahaffy, because you cannot bring yourself to face the fact that Sir Edward Carson bears on his shoulders the guilt of involving Europe in this horrible war. You don't want to believe it, and I don't blame you. But when you ask me and those like me who see that nothing will be gained for Ireland at Westminster to give the Home Rule movement just another chance, I can only em-

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phasise that we have been fooled again. We have been fooled as we were in Gladstone's day. Gladstone succeeded in getting one Home Rule Bill after another through the House of Commons only to see them thrown out by the Lords. And when at last Asquith had retrenched the power of the House of Lords, the Curragh mutineers came to the aid of Ireland's ‘die-hard’ enemies. De Valera, a young man who is now an ardent supporter of physical force, had hoped that Asquith's Home Rule Bill would automatically become law, and was prepared to accept it as a settlement of the political trouble between the two countries. Even yet he is not a member of the I.R.B., but I tell you there is grit in that youth and when the time comes he will not fail us. And Patrick Pearse said a couple of years ago with reference to the Home Rule Bill which is ‘safe on the statute book’: ‘We will stand aside and give them a chance, but if they cheat us this time, we will never trust them again.’ But now both Pearse and De Valera are with us, and we are working and waiting for the day when Ireland will take the field against England. We have won over some of the National Volunteers—not a great number as yet—but we will not rest until we have got all the others, with the exception of those who will have joined the British Army as lots of them are doing. We have seized the headquarters of the National Volunteers in Kildare Street, and only last night we had planned to seize the Mansion House to prevent Asquith making his recruiting speech there to-night. Unfortunately we were forestalled, and we learned that the Mansion House had already been manned by Redmond's National Volunteers. There are five hundred of his picked men in green uniforms guarding the Mansion House and all approaches to it. The small body of Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army are powerless against

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them. If our move to seize the Mansion House had not been anticipated we were prepared to hold the buildings against Asquith and Redmond and all comers. I'm sorry if what I have said is distressing to you, Dr. Mahaffy, but it was yourself that invited this discussion."

"Don't apologise, Mr. Clarke. As a matter of fact I respect your candour and sincerity, much as I deplore your point of view, which you cannot expect me to share. I may point out to you, Mr. Clarke, that I shall be amongst those who will support Mr. Asquith to-night at the Mansion House. In fact I shall be on the platform."

"I am aware of that, Dr. Mahaffy."

The Provost stared at him in surprise for fully a minute before he spoke again.

"How—who told you I was to be there?"

"At our meeting last night—somewhere in Dublin—we got through our secret agents a list of prominent people who are to support Asquith to-night at the Mansion House. Among those are yourself, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Birrell, William Martin Murphy, T. W. Russell, as well as all the grand panjandrums of the Irish Unionist Association. There have been three thousand tickets issued, and every care has been taken to see that not one of them shall fall into the hands of a member of the I.R.B. or of the Citizen Army. So every precaution has been taken to ensure that the meeting will pass off harmoniously. At this moment strong detachments of John Redmond's National Volunteers guard every approach to Dawson Street, and we haven't a ghost of a chance of doing anything. We are only a handful of men, while Redmond's National Volunteers number thousands, and the whole country is behind them. For the time being we are hopelessly beaten. We are fighting for a forlorn cause

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It is a terrible thing for me to see poor old Ireland——”

He stopped suddenly, overcome by his feelings, and the Provost saw that there were tears in his eyes. The anguish of the venerable patriot reacted on himself. With generous spontaneity he extended his hand to the man whose sentiments appalled him.

“Mr. Clarke,” he said in a voice tense with a pent-up emotion which he tried to master, “may I have the honour of shaking hands with a veteran who has had the courage to suffer for what he believed to be his duty?”

Tom Clarke grasped the Provost’s hand warmly.

“I am glad to see that you respect my point of view as I respect yours, Dr. Mahaffy. And let me assure you, Dr. Mahaffy, that the one thing that we members of the I.R.B. regret more than anything else is that Irish Protestants stand aloof from us. Thank God we have a few sturdy young fellows from Trinity College in our ranks, but we want them all. Protestants of the stamp of Robert Emmet, Davis, John Mitchell, Wolfe Tone, Napper Tandy, Parnell—and Casement. We have that gallant daughter of an old Sligo county family, the Countess Markievicz, but as I said, we want them all. I’m afraid you’re too old to be converted to the old Fenian faith, Dr. Mahaffy, but——”

“I’m afraid so—I’m afraid so, Mr. Clarke. Well, good-bye; I’m due at the College now, but I’ll call regularly to buy my snuff from you.”

“I’ll always be glad to see you, Dr. Mahaffy. Good-bye.”

The Provost bowed and stepped into Great Britain Street. A few paces brought him to the corner of O’Connell Street. He stood for a moment to study the outlines of the Parnell statue, which had daily offended both his aesthetic and political principles during his

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pre-provost days as he passed by it to his home in North Great George's Street. He thought it exceedingly poor as a work of art, and the sloppy frock-coat and the amorphous blunderbuss-legged trousers of the early nineties hung very crudely in their rigid and ungraceful folds. And then the tinsel gilt harp clashed horribly with the granite pedestal—the latter a gift of Richard Croker, the Tammany boss, who had to fly from New York and had settled down in his old age at Glencairn in the Dublin mountains. Repulsive old crook, Croker! Had turned religious in his old age: become what the Irish called a *voucheen*; a *craw-thumper*. Had a magnificent oratory at Glencairn and a private chaplain. Making the best of both worlds!

Parnell was another member of the Englishry who had gone native. He belonged to an old Wicklow family—a descendant of the Leinster planters, and had been educated at Cambridge. And yet—and yet he went native, with the result that he died ostracised and boycotted by the natives—boycotted and ostracised as Lafcadio Hearn had been by the Japanese.

But what about Lord Ashbourne, another scion of the aristocratic Englishry? He had changed his very name. He had called himself "Macgiolla Bridh" and went skipping around the place in kilts. He had gone "bush"—had even shed his British garb. And there was old Tom Clarke, the incorrigible Fenian veteran with his dream of converting Irish Protestants to Fenianism—and of changing the Englishry into Irishry. His optimism on that score was reminiscent of the mentality of the idiot who wrote a ballad of which he recalled two lines:

There's Kitchener from Kerry,
And French from Donegal.

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Wellington, the “Iron Duke,” had rebutted the sophistry of his Irish birth with the witty epigram: “It does not follow that one is a horse because one is born in a stable.”

And did not the statues of Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith outside Trinity College testify to the fundamental cleavage between the “two breeds and the two creeds” in Ireland? These two statues confronting College Green were erected to two men born in Ireland and educated at Trinity, both of whom had the definite stamp of the Englishry about them, and one of whom never wrote a line about Ireland after he left her shores. Goldsmith’s “Deserted Village” dealt with an English hamlet, although some people foolishly and stupidly contended that it was a portrait of his native Lissoy. And although Burke eloquently championed Ireland’s economic and religious rights, his entire outlook was English. In fact he had proclaimed himself an Englishman in that memorable extract from his philippic in connection with the American War of Independence: “If I were an American as I am an Englishman, while a foreign foe was landed in my country, I would never lay down my arms—never—never—never!” Could repudiation of the suggestion that he belonged to the Irishry be more emphatic?

“I’ll ring up Henry Doig as soon as I get back to the college,” said the aged Provost, his *monologue intérieur* merging into a semi-audible soliloquy which made passers-by stare at him. “I’ve collected a few tips for his ‘Casual Causerie’ during the course of my rambles to-day. The *Evening Mail* is the only stalwart supporter of the Union among the Dublin papers. The *Irish Times* tries to compromise—to play up to the ‘Wathmines Cawtholics’ as well as to the garrison. Henry says that a journalistic jokesmith’s job is a dreadful one. It

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must be indeed. Fresh jokes every evening. The best idea was to follow Tim Healy's system. He used to jot down bon-mots in a note-book as they occurred to him, and let them off like time-fused bombs when they came in pat in the courts or in the House of Commons."

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*"Bravo, Dublin Fusiliers!
You're no craven mutineers."*

"Hello! Dr. Doherty. Was it you the crowd were cheering?" said Tom Kettle, as he stepped towards the entrance of the Rotunda to meet the administrator of the Pro-Cathedral, who was accompanied by a tall swarthy, unkempt, ill-shaven man in the middle thirties apparently, whose face was fearfully disfigured with livid scars.

"No—'twasn't me they were cheering, Tom. It was the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Aberdeen. By the way, I'm dreadfully sorry for being so late. Has the meeting started?"

"The whole thing has fizzled out for to-day, because the Lord Mayor cannot attend. He's making arrangements for the reception of old Asquith to-night at the Mansion House. I'm afraid old Tom Clarke with the section of volunteers who have broken away from us, as well as those gutties, the Citizen Army, will make trouble to-night. And now, with 'the Act safe on the statute book,' it would be calamitous."

"Why, bless my soul! Dr. Doherty! You're the very man I'm looking for," said William Brayden, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, as he wedged his way between the priest and Tom Kettle. "Excuse me interrupting you, Tom, but I want to ask Dr. Doherty a couple of

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questions. Don’t run away. It’s nothing private. They’ve just rung me up from the *Freeman* office, Dr. Doherty. A report has come in that there was a fierce fight during the course of your speech, between the crowd and some German spies and their sympathisers. According to the report there were a couple of Germans thrown into the Liffey, and one was hanged from a lamp-post at the Bachelor’s Walk end of O’Connell Street. It was also stated that during the course of the row many people were wounded and trampled to death. It seems that there were shots fired, and several cases were taken to hospital. There are four reporters tackling the job at the office, and the news editor just rang me up and asked me to get in touch with you, as they heard you were coming along here. We will only have time to get in a short stop-press report for the *Evening Telegraph*, but I hope to have a good story for the *Freeman* to-morrow.”

“What on earth are you talking about, Mr. Brayden?” said Dr. Doherty, staring at the editor of the *Freeman’s Journal* with a half-bewildered, half-amused expression.

William Brayden toyed nervously with his Assyrian beard. His face darkened.

“I see—I see, Dr. Doherty. You’ve allowed the *Independent* to have a scoop on it. That beastly rag! Playing up to the Bantry gang, eh?”

Dr. Doherty burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

“Somebody has been pulling your leg, Mr. Brayden. One wretched heckler asked a silly question while I was speaking—I really forget what he said now. But at any rate he got very roughly treated by the crowd. They literally beat him up and flattered the clothes off his back. However, he was game to the end. The last I saw of him was as he was disappearing round the corner of the O’Connell statue, when he turned round and

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shouted, 'Up the Kayser!' That's the whole story. Otherwise there was no trouble, I assure you, Mr. Brayden."

The editor looked exceedingly glum.

"Well, well; and I thought we had a chance of a good scoop for the *Telegraph*. Well, slan leat, Dr. Doherty. See you later, Tom. I must get busy to prevent them from making fools of themselves at the office. My God! I hope I'm not too late. What's the best thing to do? I'll ring up from here. No, I won't, I'll hop on a car. It's only a few yards to Prince's Street."

He dashed through the doorway and hailed a jaunting-car. A moment later himself and his jarvey were see-sawing down O'Connell Street.

"Poor old chap! He'll burst a blood-vessel one of these days," said Kettle with a laugh, as the jaunting-car clattered over the cobbled pavement. "A man with such rolls of fat on the back of his neck should not rush about like that!"

"Well, so there's to be no meeting after all, Tom," said the priest. "I'm just as well pleased, as I feel rather tired after talking for nearly an hour on Bachelor's Walk. I see most of the crowd have melted away already. I had intended to lay before them the terrible case of this gallant chap who called on me at the presbytery in Marlborough Street yesterday, and see if we cannot get justice done to him. Allow me to introduce you to each other. Lieutenant Kettle, this is Sergeant Darby Donnellan of the Dublin Fusiliers. Donnellan will tell you his story himself of the terrible experiences of our soldiers during the retreat from Mons. I had intended springing him as a surprise on the meeting, but as it has broken up, I'm glad I met you, at any rate, as I want you to bring Sergeant Donnellan's case before the Irish Command. He has been most shamefully treated. You

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have only to look at him to see that the war has left indelible marks. Just look at him!”

Kettle looked at Sergeant Donnellan’s hideously disfigured face, and shuddered.

“Poor chap! You have been badly mauled,” he said.

“Oh, I only done my duty as an Irishman, sir,” replied Sergeant Donnellan, looking up at Kettle with awkward sheepishness.

“Spoken like an Irishman, Sergeant Donnellan! Well, you were in the Mons push, were you?”

“I was sir, until I was invalided out as no longer fit for service.”

“But the War Office has provided for you—has it not?”

“The devil damn the copper—begging your reverence’s and your honour’s pardon, but I was just thrown out. They didn’t say nothing, but only sent me off on the first returning transport after I was discharged from the field hospital.”

“Well, that’s preposterous! But it is due, of course, merely to an oversight. There has been a great deal of confusion and muddling—a thing which is inevitable under the circumstances, when the War Office has to speed up with such——”

“Yes, but Sergeant Donnellan’s case is really desperate,” cut in Dr. Doherty. “I gave him five shillings and a few feeds at the presbytery, but I want you to get him a grant from the Fund for Comforts for the Dublin Fusiliers. And what’s more, I think you ought to use your influence with General Friend to get his services adequately recognised and rewarded. When the history of this terrible war comes to be written, justice will be done to the heroism of French’s ‘contemptible little army,’ for was it not that little army that prevented the entire Allied forces from being caught in Von Kluck’s

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pincers' grip? And of French's 'contemptible little army' the most heroic were the Dublin Fusiliers. Had it not been for their magnificent musketry, which held up the German onset, Lanrezac's army would have been caught in the crab's-claw envelopment of the Fifth German Army, because if French had been outflanked during the retreat from Mons, the game was completely up on the Western Front. And of all the Dublins, who for twenty-four terrible hours stood their ground with the rest of French's army against five German divisions, the most heroic and most resourceful was Sergeant Darby Donnellan! Tom, you must press General Friend to get him the V.C."

"Certainly, Dr. Doherty, I'll do my best. But in order to do so, I must be in a position to tell General Friend exactly what Sergeant Donnellan did."

"Come on, Sergeant Donnellan, tell Mr. Kettle what you did during the famous stand at Le Cateau. Speak out."

"Oh, I only done me duty, Father," replied Donnellan, looking very embarrassed. "All the other Dublins done their duty as well as me."

"Sergeant Donnellan, the services rendered by the Dublins during that stand at Le Cateau could never be adequately rewarded. Were it not for them, the military doctrines of Schlieffen would have been as completely vindicated on the Western Front as they have been at Tannenberg, and Joffre, French, Lanrezac and the rest of them would have met the doom of Samsonov."

"Yes, that's all very true, Dr. Doherty," said Tom Kettle rather testily. "But what exactly did Sergeant Donnellan do?"

"Here come on, Donnellan. Don't be ashamed of your gallant work. Mr. Kettle wants to do all he can for you."

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“Indeed I do, Sergeant Donnellan. Come on, now,” said Kettle.

Sergeant Donnellan flushed crimson, and made a deprecatory gesture with his hand, as he wriggled uneasily in his mouldy garments.

“Well, all I done was to shoot ten Germans dead one after the other, and——”

“Now, easy a minute, Donnellan,” cut in Dr. Doherty. “Are you quite certain that you shot those ten Germans one after the other?”

“Well, Father, that I may die without the priest if——”

“Now, Donnellan, none of that, none of that! Did you see those ten Germans fall to your gun?”

“I did that, Father. They were rushing on against me, and I let them have a bullet apiece. Every time I pulled the trigger a German fell.”

“And after that, Donnellan?”

“After that I drove my bayonet into five more of them one after the other.”

“That was splendid, Donnellan, splendid indeed! But we must——”

“Just a minute, Kettle,” interposed Dr. Doherty. “Continue, Donnellan. After you bayoneted the five Germans, what next?”

“Then I seen a Hun turning the spout of a machine-gun on me, but I lepped west of him so quick that he couldn’t get me before I had landed behind his gun and bayoneted the whole machine-gun crew one after the other. And then I let a company of Huns was coming charging along have the entire contents of the spout of the machine-gun belt right into the guts.”

“Marvellous indeed! Marvellous!” said Kettle. “But tell me, how did you come by these terrible scars on your face?”

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“Oh, them marks I got during a fight with another gang of Huns. They attacked me—six of them together. I knocked them paralatic with the butt of my rifle, but as soon as I done for the lot of them I fell in a dead faint and more Huns come along and kicked me in the face and trampled on me and battered me with trench tools. Then I was took to hospital, and when I was able to move about I was demoralised.”

“You were what?” chuckled Kettle.

“Discharged, you mean, Donnellan,” corrected Dr. Doherty. “You see, Tom, Sergeant Donnellan had completed his period of enlistment by that time at any rate. By the way, Tom, Sergeant Donnellan had seen service in the Boer War as a young man. He actually fought against the Irish Brigade in South Africa.”

Sergeant Donnellan spat contemptuously. A purely symbolical expectoration.

“The Irish Brigade! The devil roast them! The dirty traitors! ’Twas the devil’s luck I didn’t lay my hands on my bold Major John Mac Bride, whom I knew and me only a gosoor in Westport. Bringing disgrace on the County of Mayo by fighting for the Boers. But if I didn’t get John Mac Bride himself I done for a score of the traitors, and in the heel of the fight—’twas at Glencoe it was—didn’t another Irish Brigader—Michael More O’Malley Pat—near Westport at the butt of the Reek at Murrisk he was born, and went to school with John Mac Bride—well, he come lepping mad for me with fixed bayonet, and him roaring ‘Up Kroojer!’ Only I leapt east of him I was a dead man. Well, I caught him such a larrup behind the lug with the butt of my rifle that I flattened him out for dead. I didn’t kill him out for all that, because after the war was over and me plying my trade as a tinsmith in County Mayo didn’t I hear that Michael Mor O’Malley

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Pat had been took simple in the head by dint of the wallop I gave him at the battle of Glencoe, and was lying foaming at the mouth in Castlebar Lunatic Asylum and raving and cursing all the breed of the Donnellans. He disremembered everything barring the clout I gave him. Well, in the long run after fourteen years he was let out as cured by the doctors just the very day war was declared by the Germans on the Beljums, and the very first night after he was let out he ran into a crowd of tinkers arguing politics at a cross-roads near Castlebar and them all well lit up with porter. And when one tinker who was for the Germans shouted ‘Up the Kayser!’ didn’t Michael Mor O’Malley Pat let out one yell, ‘Up Kroojer!’ and knock him out of his standing! He had disremembered everything barring——”

“A second Rip Van Winkle, Sergeant Donnellan!” cut in Tom Kettle with a hearty laugh. “You certainly gave him a knockout blow at Glencoe to keep him in a twilight sleep in the interval between the two wars.”

“By the way, Tom,” interposed Dr. Doherty, “Sergeant Donnellan is, like yourself, a bit of a poet. He writes his own ballads, and sings them at fairs and patterns and race-meetings.”

“Ah! that’s very interesting, Dr. Doherty. What are your ballads about, Sergeant Donnellan?”

Sergeant Donnellan shrugged his shoulders, and his scarred face writhed with a hideous travesty of a smile.

“Anything that comes handy to my mind, sir, I make a song about it—patriotism and love and hangings and horse-racing and swift greyhounds.”

“Talking about greyhounds,” said Dr. Doherty, “Sergeant Donnellan went to see the coursing for the Waterloo Cup last February. He was on furlough at the time, and so he was in mufti. A ballad that he wrote about Dilwin’s victory in the race for the cup attracted

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the attention of the great Italian poet D'Annunzio who had come to see the coursing. Donnellan, who, by the way, has a fine baritone voice, amused D'Annunzio tremendously with his rendering of 'Mister Magrath.' Would you like to hear him sing, Tom?"

"I would indeed. Come on, Sergeant Donnellan."

Donnellan scratched his head ruminatively.

"Well, to tell you the honest truth, sir, and I'm not ashamed of it, I would find it dry work singing without my throat being oiled with a couple of sups of porter. And I could down a pint this minute and it would give me great heart."

"Quite right, Sergeant Donnellan. I find myself that I write better and sing with more zest after a couple of drinks. What about taking him along with us to the Catholic Club, Dr. Doherty?"

"A splendid idea, Tom. But just before we go I want Sergeant Donnellan to sing a verse or two of some of his old Boer War songs. They are very topical just now. Come on, Sergeant Donnellan. We'll go and have a drink in a few minutes, but before we leave here, I want you to sing the chorus of 'Bravo, Dublin Fusiliers!' for Lieutenant Kettle. Let it rip, Donnellan."

"Well, I'll do me best, Father."

So saying, Sergeant Donnellan stepped back a few paces, and, squaring his shoulders, and beating time with his right foot in keeping with the rhythm of his song, struck up:

"Bravo, Dublin Fusiliers!
You're no craven mutineers.
You bravely fought along Glencoe's dread height,
Put ten thousand of the Boers to flight,
'Twas a grand and glorious sight,
Bravo, Dublin Fusiliers!"

"Bravo, Sergeant Donnellan. You put the proper

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spirit and tempo into it. Is it not strange, Tom, how that old ballad fires one at the present time?”

Tom Kettle made a wry grimace. “Sergeant Donnellan’s singing is very spirited, but I personally do not respond to the sentiment of the song. After all, Ireland was bitterly opposed to the Boer War. You may remember that the entire Irish Party, with the exception of T. P. O’Connor, walked out of the House of Commons one night as a protest against the war. It was a most unjust war. Even Englishmen protested against it. You remember Lloyd George’s attitude to it. He was nearly lynched at——”

“Would you like to hear a bar of ‘What do you think of the Irish now?’ Father?” cut in Sergeant Donnellan. “I’m feeling middling droughthy, but here goes:

“What do you think of the Irish now?
What do you think of the boys?
You used to call us traitors
On account of agitators,
But you can’t call us traitors now!
What do you think of the Fusiliers——”

The song stopped short suddenly, and the singer spun round like a teetotum in the iron grip of Sergeant Barton’s huge paw. There was an expression of utter amazement and panic on the scarred face that confronted the big detective.

Dr. Doherty gripped Johnny Barton’s arm angrily.

“This is outrageous, Sergeant Barton. What is the meaning of this insult to Sergeant——”

“Sergeant moryah! He’s as much a sergeant, Father, as my ar—— As my foot. He is——”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Easy a minute, Father, and I’ll tell you. This man is just an impostor and a common thief. His name is Darby Donnellan, better known as Darby the Drouth

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by dint of the power of porter he can down. It's like pouring water into a lime-kiln to be spilling porter down his gullet. A tramp-tinker he is by profession, but his main ways of living is by robbing right and left and centre. And now, Father, I'm going to charge him. Now, listen to me, you dirty good-for-nothing black-guard! I charge you with inciting a mob at three or four o'clock this morning to wreck a pork-butcher's shop in Camden Street, and with appropriating for yourself half a pig's carcase and a quantity of pork sausages, black puddings, white pud——”

“That's a bloody lie! I never stole no pork nor no sausages. I was with the crowd that was avenging the atrocities that the Kayser done on the Beljums. Now, tell me this. If you seen the Huns doing on your own sister what they done——”

“Shut your ignorant gob and listen to the rest of the charges against you, or you'll get an extra stretch for obstructing me in the discharge of my duty. I also charge you with robbing all the poor-boxes and the box for St. Anthony's bread in the Pro-Cathedral in Marlborough Street, and with posing as a Dublin Fusilier invalided home with war wounds for the purpose of imposing on the charitable. And I charge you with getting money by false pretences from the Sisters of Charity, you letting on to them holy women the ways you seen the Angels of Mons hooshing on the Beljums to knock hell out of the Huns and the ways you seen the Russians who came through England tearing along on their steam-rollers. You dirty liar! And now I put you under arrest, and I warn you that anything you may say may be used in evidence against you!”

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“*The Irish people are practically unanimous in wishing ‘God speed to the Allies’ in a fight between honour and dishonour, in defence of contracts against a policy of ‘to hell with contracts’!*”—*Alderman Lorcan Sherlock, Lord Mayor of Dublin, in his speech introducing Mr. Asquith at the War meeting at the Mansion House, Dublin, September 25th, 1914.*

“What will it be, Johnny?” I asked as we seated ourselves at the counter of Mooney’s in O’Connell Street. “A ball of malt?”

“I don’t know but I wouldn’t sooner a pint. Mooney’s pulis the best pint in Dublin bar none, and Heever, the manager here, wouldn’t let a pint wasn’t creamy go across his counter. A quiet sensible man is Heever, even if he is a poet itself. All them other poets in Dublin is full of treason, always blaspheming against the British Government and the polis, but Heever only does poetry as a side-line. He——”

“You mean he is more interested in porter than in poetry, Johnny?”

Sergeant Barton’s colossal fist came down on the counter with a bang that made the glasses rattle.

“Now, you took the words out of me mouth. He minds his business, and what’s more, he’s flohool! Heever’s the sort of publican that if he saw you outside ‘tis the way he’d ask you to come inside. All them other publicans—they’d never ask you if you had a mouth on you!”

“Have you ever read any of Heever’s poetry, Johnny?”

“Begob, I did that, and ‘tis the only poetry I can understand. He writes grand songs about the lovely

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colleens and the round towers and the leprechauns and the cluricauns and the pookahs and the fairies and the ruins of old Ireland, and the Dublin mountains and them lit up with the glory of the sunshine and the silver strand of Dublin Bay. But them other poets, Pearse and Macdonagh and Plunkett and Darrell Figgis and the rest of them, I can't make head nor tail of their songs. I told some of our lads that looks after the political side, that 'tis my belief that a power of the songs them poets writes is all codes between them and the German submarines that's as plentiful outside the butt of Howth Head as Dublin Bay herrings. But that's nothing to do with me. My business is just looking after bowsies and rowdies and pickpockets and shebeens and burglars and ordinary criminals. Let the others look after the politicians and the poets. There's plenty of deep smart men in the force to deal with——”

“If it isn't my old friend Sergeant Barton, begob!” cut in a voice behind us. “And how is Mr. G.?”

Looking round, we saw the portly form of Paddy Heever, the manager of the Abbey Street branch of Mooney's. He was elbowing his way among the crowd of revellers in the bar.

“I'm standing, Sergeant Barton,” went on Heever. “I'm off duty this evening, and I'm taking a busman's holiday in my own bar. I have just come from Mr. Asquith's war meeting. There was a bit of a scrimmage near the door of the Round Room where I was standing, and so I backed out. The National Volunteers were throwing Sheehy-Skeffington out of the Round Room. He had got in disguised as a clergyman.”

“But I don't see why they should object to Sheehy-Skeffington,” I said. “There is nothing revolutionary about Sheehy-Skeffington's ideals. He is just a man of peace—an avowed pacifist.”

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“That’s all cod, Mr. G.,” said Sergeant Barton cynically. “Now, tell me what the devil does a man want to stick his nose into a war meeting, kicking up a row about peace? Peace is all right in its own place, but a man would run the risk of getting his head split and him to talk about peace in Ireland to-day, and the farmers getting big prices for their bullocks and half the women of Dublin drawing the separation allowance. And then a madman to walk into Mr. Asquith’s meeting at the Mansion House and have the audacity to talk about peace and the country making bags of money, and——”

“Here, what about the drinks?” cut in Paddy Heever. “What will you have, Sergeant Barton?”

“Thanking you all the same, Mr. Heever, but Mr. Griffin is standing. Aye, here’s the drinks.”

“Yes, it’s my round, Mr. Heever,” I said. “What will you have?”

“Ginger ale, if you don’t mind.”

“Well, but that’s a queer drink, Mr. Heever,” said Johnny Barton. “Well, it beats me how you can get the inspiration for all them lovely songs you write on that cold stuff! Now, there’s Darby the Drouth, the tramp-tinker, says he can’t write a line unless the porter is well up in him. And I must say there’s a lot of go about some of the songs that same tinker wrote. Some of them is as good as any that Blind Raftery himself wrote, I’m told.”

“‘Tis only a dirty penny poet Darby the Drouth is,” snapped Paddy Heever irritably, “Singing his own ballads at fairs and races and patterns, and selling them in penny sheets. Now a decent poet who gets his works printed in the *Weekly Freeman* wouldn’t be seen doing the likes.”

Johnny Barton’s hands floated abroad in a deprecatory gesture.

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"Oh, sure he's only a poet in a small way, and he doesn't make big money out of his songs."

"'Tisn't the money I'm talking about. 'Tis the artistic merit of his poetry. Not that I'm boasting, but though 'tis myself that says it, could you imagine the *Weekly Freeman* saying about him what they said about me, that I was 'a lyrical poet of no mean order,' and another time they said that 'Mr. Heever writes very respectable poetry.'"

"Now sure, we all know that Darby the Drouth isn't in the same street with you in poetry, Mr. Heever. And by the same token, bad cess to that same dirty blackguard if he didn't get away from me to-day and me taking him to the station."

"I heard he was arrested," said Heever. "Wasn't it for taking part in the raid on the German pork-butcher's shop early this morning?"

"'Twas that. And 'twas also for him to let on he was a Dublin Fusilier invalided home from the war. Well, we got as far as the G.P.O. and Darby walking between me and that lepping County Kerry man, Cold Cabbage, who should never have been let on the streets of Dublin in plain clothes, when all of a sudden Darby shouts out: 'My gallowses is burst. Hold on a minute till I make a belt of them or my trousers will fall.' 'Come on,' says I. 'You can attend to your toilet at the station.' 'Do you want to make a show of me before the holy people of Dublin to have me walking down O'Connell Street without trousers like a dirty Scottish trumper?' says he. 'The devil a foot I'll budge till I make a belt out of me gallowses.' And with that he bends down by the ways he was settling his gallowses, and all of a sudden doesn't he let a drive out with his head to the west against the butt of Cold Cabbage's belly, and knocks him flat! And then he lowered his head and made a pig's rush between

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me two legs, and sent me over his shoulder. By the time I got to my feet again he was off towards North Earl Street, him yelling ‘Up the Beljums!’ and the crowds cheering him. And a crowd of shawlies gathered around me and called me dirty names and said I was a pro-German, and asked me how would I like it if the Huns done on my own sister what they done on the women of the Beljums, and when I got to the station the inspector said that I was a disgrace to the ‘G’ division to be took in by a dirty bowsey lout of a tinker letting on that his gallowses was burst. ‘Now, will you whisht, you thundering ludhramaun,’ says he, ‘and don’t make a mess of the job I’m giving you now. I’m told Endymion is going round the town with his naked sword, and him roaring out that he is Brian Boru come back to life again, and that the Citizen Army is the Danes.’ ‘He’s always took that way when the moon is full,’ says I, ‘but the devil a bit of harm in the creature.’ ‘No harm—is it?’ says he. ‘No harm to have a foaming madman with a bloody naked sword running around the town and half a dozen different sorts of private armies charging about too, apart from His Majesty’s forces? Do you call that no harm?’ says he. ‘Tis only simple the poor creature is,’ says I. ‘Another word out of you,’ says he, ‘and you’ll find yourself in your uniform minus your stripes, and you’ll be on point-duty down in the Coombe, crushing clocks with them canal-barges of yours. Now you are to shadow the Citizen Army until we get tracks of Endymion and put him under restraint. It’s bad enough for the polis to have to protect the Citizen Army against the people of Dublin without him attacking them too. And Endymion isn’t the only madman bothering us to-day. All the reporters in the *Freeman’s Journal* is gone mad too, them and old Brayden, the editor, ringing me up and wanting to know about a lot

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of German spies that they said was thrown into the Liffey during Father Doherty's recruiting speech on Bachelor's Walk. I'm told 'twas the 'Bird Flanagan' that spread that yarn. That playboy is up to all sorts——”

“Tell me, Sergeant Barton,” cut in Paddy Heever. “Was Endymion always daft like that? Mebbe he is only mad with the madness of genius. Didn't the immortal bard of Avon say that 'great wits are sure to madness near allied'?”

“I wouldn't put it past a knowledgeable poet like yourself, Mr. Heever, to hit upon the proper explanation of the poor creature's malady. Endymion, or as some calls him 'Mad Farrell,' belongs to an old Irish county family of gentry or half-sirs. He has as many Christian names as a Trinity College Professor has letters after his name—Cashell Boyle O'Connor Fitz-maurice Burke Stewart Tisdell Farrell. It's like a string of sausages, so 'tis. Well, what happened is that he took to learning Latin as a gosoor and him ten years old. Now, I always says that it isn't right for the laity to be learning holy Latin. It's a sort of blasphemy. It's the language for priests. Well, then, after learning Latin he done worse. He took to reading the Bible! And the next thing he done was to eat meat on Friday like a heathen Protestant. And then he got queer in the head, and one day when he had a couple of sups in him he lepped into a boiling vat of porter at the brewery, and when they took him out he was half-cooked! His brains was boiling in his head, and he never spoke but in that queer screechy ways ever since! And they had to run off flows of lovely foaming porter down the sewers! 'Twouldn't do for a man with a decent drought on him that he was prepared to quench with honest money to drink porter that was like soup from a Christian being half-boiled in it! 'Tis a sort of cannibalism it would be—God save us!”

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“Well, did you shadow the Citizen Army as you were told?” asked Paddy Heever.

“I did that. They were trying to get into Dawson Street to the Mansion House, first from the Nassau Street end and then they went up Grafton Street and tried to get round to the Stephen’s Green entrance to Dawson Street, but Redmond’s National Volunteers threatened to knock hell out of them. And Jim Larkin was addressing a small crowd was backing the Citizen Army—maybe a couple of dozen or so—and the crowd yelling at him and calling him a pro-German. And with that Cold Cabbage comes up to me and says that I needn’t bother my brains any longer protecting the Citizen Army against Endymion, because the latest news they had about him was that he had gone north. ‘Gone north,’ I says, ‘that’s worse. Mebbe now he’ll take a notion to split Ned Carson asunder with that bloody old sword of his!’ ‘Tisn’t to the North of Ireland he’s gone,’ says he, ‘but to the north side of the city, I mean. Aye, off with him up north and into Tom Clarke’s shop—Tom Clarke the old Fenian that is, and he says to Tom Clarke that he is Father Eugene O’Growney come back to life again, and he asks Tom Clarke to give him copies of each of the four books on the Irish language to make some changes in them. You see, Tom Clarke sells newspapers and copy-books and bull’s-eyes and holy pictures and O’Growney’s Irish books as well as tobacco. And Tom Clarke lets on to take him serious and gives him the books. Old Tom is used to Endymion dropping in at odd times, and saying one time he was Robert Emmet and another time that he was Cuchullain or King Roderick O’Connor or Brian Boru or Niall of the Nine Hostages. And so Tom says very politely, ‘Yes, Father O’Growney’—anything to get rid of him quietly. And so off goes

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Endymion to his digs in the North side with the four books of O'Growney under his oxther. And that's the end of him for to-day anyway, I hope. But tell me this, Mr. Heever: I suppose there was great goings on at the Mansion House?"

"Yes, there was great cheering and speechifying and all that. The Lord Mayor spoke first, and said that barring a handful of scrub, all the people of Ireland were on the side of the Allies. And then Mr. Asquith spoke. He looked just the same old red-faced, well-fed, stocky man that he was two years ago when he was addressing the Home Rule meeting a few yards away from here."

"Aye, I mind that time very well," cut in Barton. "That was the time that the suffragette flung a hatchet at him, and missed him and hit John Redmond. But tell me, did Mr. Asquith say anything about Home Rule at all?"

"Not a word—not a single word. But he said that the Germans were very disappointed at the loyalty of the people of Ireland, because they expected that England would be hampered by civil war in Ireland."

"And did his worship the Provost of Trinity College make a speech at all?"

"Well, I went away while Mr. Asquith was speaking."

"Who else was on the platform, Mr. Heever?"

"Well, there was wee Joe Devlin and John Redmond, and the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Aberdeen and Birrell."

"Talking about Birrell, 'twas by dint of his gradh for the Citizen Army that the feet was near cut off me to-day. Twice to-day I had to follow the Citizen Army. The first time was when they were going down O'Connell Street, and I was afeared that the crowd that was at Father Doherty's recruiting meeting would massacree

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them, and then again when the inspector sent me along shadowing them when he was in dread that Endymion would make a charge at them with his sword.”

“But wouldn’t you think now, Sergeant Barton, that Mr. Birrell would only like to see the Citizen Army abolished altogether?”

“Mr. Birrell doesn’t want no trouble in Dublin, Mr. Heever. The recruiting is doing fine—so fine that a new recruiting office was opened to-day in Grafton Street. And if he suppressed the Citizen Army or allowed anyone to interfere with them, mebbe ‘tis how the people would turn and back them, and make Ireland a Communist Republic. And what’s more, Mr. Birrell says to the inspector that he thinks it great fun watching the Citizen Army at their drilling and route-marching. He’s the devil’s joker, Mr. Birrell is. Sure I seen him at the bloody Abbey Theatre and him ready to burst with the laughing at the play where a young lad is boasting to a lot of girls and letting on that he killed his da. It’s a grand play, so ‘tis. You mind how Christy Mahon—that was his name—said first that he split his da’s head with a loy to the Adam’s apple, and then after Pegeen Mike gave him a couple of sups, he says that he split him to the collar-bone, and when he got well lit-up he says that he split him to the breeches-belt. ‘Tis a grand play, so——”

“Time, gentlemen, please.”

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“The One Bright Spot.”

“Only ‘twas too near to closing time Paddy Heever would have stood his round,” said Sergeant Barton as

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we stepped out of Mooney's bar into the balmy air of a Dublin September night. 'Paddy has a heart as big as a cow's, but he has to be careful of the licensing laws. But if it wasn't too late he wouldn't be happy until he set the two of us paralatic blind. Only I thought he was a bit begrudging and jealous about Darby the Drouth's ballads. Sure isn't his worship, the Provost of Trinity College, dying to meet Darby. But whisht, I hear musicianers!"

Just then we turned into O'Connell Street and saw a military band swinging round from O'Connell Bridge along the North Quays towards the Phoenix Park. In the rear of the band followed a torchlight procession of men in green uniforms.

"Begob, it's the band of them College-bred soldiers playing the Lord Lieutenant and Mr. Asquith to the Viceregal Lodge. Step out a bit and we'll have a good view from Hopkins and Hopkins's corner of Eden Quay. Man, but aren't them Trinity lads letting it rip with 'The Men of the West'? And isn't it the queer thing for them to be playing a song about the French landing at Killala a hundred years ago and tearing mad through Ballina and beating hell out of the English at Castlebar? By the same token Darby the Drouth made a grand song about it: 'The Races of Castlebar' was the name he put on it. Easy now. Let us just take the corner into Eden Quay, fearing we'd be swept out of our standing by the crowds."

We had barely turned into Eden Quay when an avalanche of humanity, cheering wildly, swept past us from the side-walk of O'Connell Bridge.

"That's the longest torchlight procession I ever seen," said Sergeant Barton. "And look at them fireworks shooting up from the Custom House and from the Four Courts—aye, and from Trinity College too."

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"The one bright spot, Johnny!" I remarked.

"Begob, but Sir Edward Grey said nothing but the truth when he said them words."

After lapsing into silence for a minute, he resumed his running commentary.

"Look at the guard of honour of National Volunteers in grand green uniforms following the procession. A fine body of men, begob—there's a power of them there, too—three hundred men—no less, I'll bet. And now comes the Lord Lieutenant's carriage. See the outriders in front, and them lepping in their saddles. And see Lord and Lady Aberdeen bowing right and left to the crowds is yelling mad, and in the carriage behind is his aide-de-camp, the Honourable Gerald something or other—'tis a name like a racehorse's. And in the carriage behind him is old Asquith and Birrell. They say that old 'Wait and see' likes a sup, but begob if he doesn't, 'tis how he should take an action for libel against his complexion! I never seen such a brick-coloured man in my born puff. And see old Birrell leaning over him and him laughing fit to burst. I'll bet he's telling the Prime Minister a good one. And in the motor-car behind him is John Redmond and wee Joe Devlin—'the poisoned bullet,' wasn't it, that Tim Healy called him?"

"No—wasn't it the other way round, Johnny?"

"To be sure it was. My brains is bothered to-day. No, what Tim Healy called wee Joe was 'a circulating decimal'—wasn't it?"

"No, Johnny. He called him a 'duodecimo Demosthenes.'"

"Aye, that's it. I was near it anyways. But look, behind John Redmond's car is more National Volunteers—crowds of them—mebbe another three hundred, all told. Begob, I pity either of the other two armies—the

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Citizen Army or John MacNeill's Irish Volunteers—if they show themselves to-night. Sure them National Volunteers would eat the two of them other armies, and go hungry after. And talking about the Citizen Army, wondering I am if they went back yet to Liberty Hall. It's only a few yards away, and mebbe I might as well have a peep round to see. Them's the last of the processioneers turning down Bachelor's Walk. I suppose you'll be going home now, sir."

"Yes, Johnny, I'm going home. Good-night."

I leant on the parapet of O'Connell Bridge, and inhaled the bracing sea-breeze blowing up the Liffey from Dublin Bay, as I watched the mammoth detective lurch along Eden Quay with his ungainly shuffle until he became merged with the moonlit gloaming. Beneath me an anchored rowing-boat pitched and rolled to the rising tide; athwart the slim mast at its prow was fixed a huge yellow poster with heavy green letters: "Join an Irish Brigade to-day and avenge Belgium." Fireworks were soaring ever and anon from the cupola of the Customs House, and seagulls, startled by the intermittent polychromatic stars and jets of flame, whirled and eddied over the surface of the river, their plaintive cries ringing a weird antiphon to the confused babble of the excited crowd that swept along the side-walk and to the fitful strains of the O.T.C. band which were wafted along, momentarily more and more faint, from the direction of the Four Courts.

Then suddenly this confused orchestration was drowned by the strains of mass singing of the "Internationale." Turning round, I saw the Citizen Army equipped with a bizarre array of out-of-date rifles, shot-guns, pikes and pitchforks debouching on the bridge from Westmoreland Street, and flanked on either side by Dublin Metropolitan policemen. At the head of this

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perambulating museum was a red banner with the words "Long Live the Workers' Republic!" inscribed on it in gold letters. Cat-calls, booing and gibes, pregnant with the acidulated venom which only a Dublin crowd could conjure up, greeted those Communards, born out of their time.

"'Tis well yez have the polis to protect yez, or I'd massacree the lot of yez myself," screamed an aged fish-wife as she pushed an out-moded tricycle perambulator loaded with herrings and mackerel into the roadway, just as the Citizen Army, in response to the command "Right wheel!" was swinging round Eden Quay in the direction of Liberty Hall.

"Mark time!" shouted the commandant panically, seeing that the old lady was preparing to park in the middle of the road. Simultaneously the strains of the "Internationale" died away in a gurgle of blasphemy.

"Now, mother, you can't block the traffic," said a policeman in firm but kindly Tipperary tones as he guided herself and her merchandise towards the sidewalk.

"Sergeant agraah," she pleaded with diplomatic cajolery, after a covert glance at his stripeless sleeve, "let me give one belt with a fish across the dirty snot of that squinty-eyed bowsey, and I'll say three 'Hail Marys' for you this blessed night! Two sons of mine is fighting for the Beljums, and I'd like to ask that squinty-eyed tin soldier what would he do if the Kayser done on his own sister what he done——"

"Arrah, whisht, Mother Machree," cut in the policeman. "Go home now and say the Rosary to Our Lady to bring your sons home safe from the War, and don't forget the three 'Hail Marys' you promised to say for me, mam."

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Sympathetic grimy hands reached out towards the fore-wheel of the protoplasmic perambulator, and a moment later the old lady was the centre of an admiring crowd on the side-walk, who yelled, "Up the Beljums!" and "To hell with the Kayser and Jim Larkin!"

"The Citizen Army playing at soldiers like young chisellers, and their butties in the Dublins knocking hell out of the Germans!" came the Parthian shaft of the venerable virago.

"Quick march!" barked the commandant of the Citizen Army.

The tempo of the "Internationale" no longer accorded with the *Stimmung* of the Dublin sansculottes. They marched on in silence until their leading file was abreast of Mooney's in Eden Quay. And then it was with a note of plaintive defeatism that they struck up their marching tune to the air of "Tipperary":

"'Tis the wrong thing to crush the workers,
"Tis the wrong thing to do.
"Tis the right thing to hate the bosses,
And old Birrell and his crew.
Onward, Workers' Union,
For ever we'll be true,
And we'll all join up behind Jim Larkin
And the Red Flag Aboo!"

I watched the Citizen Army lurching along dejectedly, the reaping-hooks, pitchforks, and improvised pikes which were dotted among their ranks gleaming silvery in the moonlight, until they disappeared round the corner into Beresford Place, where Sergeant Barton was waiting to see them safe into Liberty Hall.

The sea-breeze was beginning to blow rather sharply from the mouth of the Liffey. Fireworks were still soaring aloft from the cupolas of the Customs House, the

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Four Courts and the G.P.O., but the war-fevered crowd was rapidly melting away. The anti-climax ensuing on the passing of the viceregal cavalcade, the closing of the public-houses and the baiting of the Citizen Army had come. I was feeling rather tired, and was about to board a tram-car when the rhythmic tramp of marching feet to my rear struck my ear. Vaguely wondering whether they were regular soldiers or another of Dublin's free-lance armies, I turned round, and saw that they were “John MacNeill's Volunteers,” who on the previous night had seized the headquarters of the Irish Volunteers in Kildare Street—a *coup d'état* which was a sequel to their recent secession from the parent organisation, which after the breach changed its title to that of the “National Volunteers.”

This corps, the third of Dublin's warring hosts which had marched past me during the course of less than half an hour, comprised roughly about a hundred men. A yard ahead of the foremost file plodded Padraic Pearse with his typical heavy gait, his lips tightly compressed, the glow of fanatical faith irradiating his pale priest-like face. Among those who followed in his wake I recognised the animated eager countenance of Thomas Macdonagh and the almost girlish silhouette of Joseph Plunkett. It was the last time I ever saw them. Two years and a half later they unflinchingly faced a firing-squad in Richmond Barracks. And just as they filed past me for the last time on that September night it is strange to recall now that my mind harked back to my first meeting with each of the three of them. On my first encounter with Padraic Pearse he soundly rated me on the evils of drink and backing horses. Ten minutes after my first meeting with MacDonagh in our schoolmastering days we plunged fiercely into a rather foolish argument about the respective cultural merits

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of Gaelic and Greek—I say foolish because Mac-Donagh's knowledge of Greek was as flimsy as mine of Gaelic. And a few minutes after my first encounter with Joseph Plunkett he was weeping because the nuances of differentiation between the four types of conditional clauses in Greek syntax had eluded his understanding.

Heedless alike of the escort of Dublin Metropolitan Police that flanked them and of the booing and jeering of the thinning crowds on the pavement, Padraic Pearse plodded along at the head of his little band into O'Connell Street—that magnificent thoroughfare, one-half of which was destined in the course of a few years, as the result of carrying his evangel into practice, to be blown up in one rebellion, while the other half went up in a subsequent one. And as the marching men swung to the east of the row of statues that run through the centre of that broad street, the last fireworks soared from the roofs of the G.P.O., the Custom House and the Four Courts. Was it symbolical of the columns of flame and flying masonry under which all three buildings were destined to collapse in the fateful years to follow?

When, a couple of years later, I saw the statues in O'Connell Street looming thrice their actual bulk in the mirage of smoke and heated atmosphere, luridly silhouetted against the walls of flame on either side, my mind flashed back to that September night when, heedless of the jeering crowd, this stocky young man with his peasant gait plodded grimly through that thoroughfare past that building where he was to make his desperate stand against the armaments of an empire, his spirit aglow with that Fenian faith which had prompted him as a boy to vow that he would die for Ireland; that Fenian faith which inspired the most

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beautiful of his Gaelic poems, the elusive charm of which is lost in this translation:

I have turned my face
To this road before me,
To the deed that I see
And the death I shall die.

CHAPTER II

ROSANNA, THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER

(1)

"WELL, it's just as well, Darby, that Johnny Barton did not know that you were actually engaged in getting yet another private army together on the night of Asquith's war-meeting in Dublin," I said, as we sat by a blazing turf fire on the shore of a little bay, to the west of which the gigantic crest of Meenawn, known as the Cathedral Cliffs, served as a rampart for Achill Island against the fury of the Atlantic. "It would have broken his heart. As it was he had his hands full to deal with the various free-lance armies in Dublin."

"Aye, I suppose 'tis how he'd say I stole them guns," the tinker retorted challengingly. "A pity then you didn't tell him I done it."

"I can assure you, Darby, I did not even mention that I knew you. I have innate in me an Irishman's aversion to give information to the police about anything or anybody. Furthermore, I've known your wife as long as I can remember, and she was always very attentive and kind to me and my family, when we lived in Boynmore many years ago. But despite all that, I can't help feeling that I am conniving at robbery in not denouncing you to the police, Darby."

The tinker spat his quid of tobacco fiercely into the blazing turf fire.

"Now, if another man said the likes of that to me——"

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“Well,” I parried, “what would you do?”

“‘Tis how I’d brain him with my soldering iron.”

“And you never done nothing with that same soldering iron but brain people,” commented his barefooted fourteen-year-old daughter, Rosanna, as she poised a steaming kettle aloft in one hand and a teapot in the other. “See how this kettle is leaking, and you too lazy to put a bit of solder on its rim.”

“Less of your lip or I’ll take my breeches belt to you,” roared the tinker, leaping to his feet, and making a gesture of unbuckling the leather strap that encircled him amidships.

Rosanna leaped lithely backward, still brandishing the kettle and teapot, her large dark eyes scowling through a mass of tangled black hair, her short red flannel petticoat swirling about her shapely bare legs. She flushed crimson momentarily, then went pale, as she choked back a hysterical sob.

“Me ma told me to tell the polis if you lay a finger on me again that ways.”

“That’s the ways women teaches their gosoors to show respect to their fathers,” bawled the tinker, still gripping the buckle of his belt ominously. “‘Twasn’t my breeches belt that I gave you a month back before a whole field of tinsmiths outside Clifden after the races, but the ass’s reins. Howsomever, I’m too tired to be bothered belting you to-day. Only for that——”

He stopped short, and after giving another menacing tug to his belt, he subsided limply on the heather.

“The kettle’s off the boil now,” whimpered Rosanna, as she edged sideways towards the fire, all the time keeping a vigilant eye on her parent’s movements.

“Well, boil it again,” scowled the tinker. “And mind, let that tea pull a bit before you give it to us. And don’t

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be afeared. I'm not going to bother my brains skelping you now."

By way of emphasising the fact that the feud between himself and his daughter was now a closed incident he rolled round on his other side, so that his back was turned to the fire, and shook a menacingly clenched fist at me.

"I never stole nothing in my life, and don't you never dare to say I done it again. Do you hear that, Mr. Griffin?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"It all depends on the way you look at it, Darby. You say you did not steal the pig's carcase from the German pork-butcher, and you say that you did not steal the rifles, and you settle it with your own conscience."

"I didn't steal nothing. It was all in accordance with the teachings of Karl Marx. I was only expropriating the instruments and means of production from the tyrants that grinds the faces of the proletariat."

"I see, Darby, I see. Well, go on."

"To be sure, you see, and so will the whole world see when we have extirpated all the burjoisy and expropriated the instruments and means of production."

"Well, it appears, Darby, that on the night of Asquith's war-meeting in Dublin you collected all sorts of firearms from the various armies that marched through the city that day. It seems marvellous to me how you managed to do it, especially as Johnny Barton and the other detectives were on the look-out for you."

"'Twas easy enough in a ways to do it. Johnny Barton and the rest of them had their hands full that day, trying to keep the National Volunteers from massacreeing John MacNeill's Volunteers, and trying to keep Endymion from murdering the Citizen Army. And then I had Hoke the Spud and Lonesome Pint and

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Steal the Hen—three of the smartest tinsmiths in Mayo—helping me. And there was a field of Wicklow tinsmiths camping out along the Dodder and they lent us their ass-carts for the job.”

“But how did you manage to get a hold of these firearms? Did you take them by force?”

“How the hell could we take them by force? We pinched them here and there in different public-houses when the lads that had them was lowering a pint. Most of them we took from the National Volunteers and the Citizen Army, and just a couple from MacNeill’s Volunteers. Aye, and we took a few from soldiers home from the front, and from the G.R.s.”

“Tell me this, Darby. You say that you took some of these rifles from the Citizen Army, and yet you contend that you support the principles of Jim Larkin and James Connolly—that you want to fight for a Workers’ Republic.”

“I never said no such thing as that I wanted to fight for a Workers’ Republic. There’s something grammatically wrong with the Citizen Army and Jim Larkin and the lot of them. They want a Trades Unionist Republic. Trades Unionists and capitalists is all burjoisy, and so is peelers and priests and strong farmers. The Republic that the tinsmiths is fighting for is to be on the principles of that extinguished philosopher, Karl Marx, and his principles was the same as those of Granuaille, the great queen of Clew Bay who exploited and expropriated the ships of bloody Queen Bess in Clew Bay. That castle there at the butt of Clare Island was the first great stronghold against the burjoisy who was grinding the faces of the poor.”

His hand fluttered with a rhetorical gesture across the grey waters towards the crenellated crest of Clare Island, looming out of the Atlantic.

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"I begin to understand your economic philosophy now, Darby," I said. "So Queen Elizabeth also belonged to the hated bourgeoisie, did she?"

"She did that. She spent her life grinding the faces of the proletariat, and hurling them into the maelstrom of capitalism. And we are following in the footsteps of the great Granuaile, and when the time comes, them rifles will come out of the dumps where we have hid them, and 'tis how we'll declare war not only on England, but on the National Volunteers and MacNeill's Volunteers and the Citizen Army and Ned Carson's Army. The worst rifles I ever seen was the ones we pinched from Carson's army. They were old Mausers that the Kayser gave him, and the regulation ammunition won't fit them—so they're no good. Of course Carson knew he'd never get the call to use them, and he only wanted them for brag. Oh, and there was some that I took from the National Volunteers the day of the gun-running at Howth, just after the scrimmage they had with the polis and the Scottish Borderers. You mind that while Darrell Figgis was argufying with Old Harrel, the polis Commissioner, the Volunteers at the back melted away quietly, and threw their rifles over the park wall nearby. Now, them rifles, as you may happen to know, were smuggled away and hidden in houses alongside the park, and that night a lot of hearses with coffins drove up to the houses and Darrell Figgis gave me the job of helping to load the rifles into the coffins. Well, I expropriated fourteen of them rifles. Them was the fourteen that was missing after, and they thought that the Scottish Borderers or the polis had took them."

"But, Darby, tell me this. You haven't got a very good reputation for honesty, and I'm wondering how Darrell Figgis came to trust you with the job."

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The tinker gave me a glance of withering scorn.

"I'd have you know, if so be you don't know it already, that Darrell Figgis and myself is both the most extinguished poets in Ireland—much more extinguished than that long yalla pookha's miseroom, Yeats. Only that very day I sold him a copy of the poems of D'Annunzio, the grand Italian poet and dog-fancier—a presentation copy that D'Annunzio gave me himself and dedicated to me with his own name wrote on it and all. And let me tell you he writes a rotten scrawl, and all the power of money was lost on his education and all."

"That's very interesting, Darby. How did you come in contact with D'Annunzio?"

The tinker shot me another glance of withering scorn, blended with pity.

"He knew me by my writings," he snapped.

"But how? Where did you meet him?"

"I met him at the coursing for the Waterloo Cup a couple of years ago, when I went over to make a book there with Hoke the Spud. It was the year Dilwin won the Cup, and that was two years after Boss Croker won the Grand National with that grand horse Orby. He took a great fancy to my singing of 'Misther MacGrath,' and he told me, what's more, that all the holy Cardinals in their scarlet robes and the Holy Father himself was always singing my ballads at the Vatican, and that gosoors was playing them on Jews' harps in the streets of Rome and the musicianers was playing them on their guitars in the gondolas in Venice, and that——"

"There isn't no milk, da," cut in Rosanna. "And the tea is pulled."

"What?"

"There isn't no milk."

"Why in hell didn't you find that out before you

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made the tea? Becripes, you'll get the belt hot and heavy before you go to bed for this, you little strap. Take that old can at once, and get a sup from that old cow that's grazing along the ditch. Her udder looks middling full."

Rosanna stamped her bare foot on the heather, and tossed her tousled hair defiantly.

"Indeed, I won't do no such thing, da. The last time I milked a cow she gave me a kick in the butt of the belly—that was Brian Burke's bricky heifer in Boynmore. And what's more, me ma says that 'tis a sin to milk a farmer's cow on the unknownst to him."

"You blasted little heifer! What's coming over children at all at all them days? A pack of disobedient ungrateful little bastards they are. Here, give me the old can and I'll milk the cow myself. And where's my old ash-plant, in case I have to give a bit of a skelp behind the lug to some cantankerous islander or his dog."

After shuffling on a few yards, the tinker stopped, and turned round abruptly.

"Rosanna agrah, you better go down to Darrell Figgis's cottage after tea and go with him catching wild goats on Meenawn Cliffs. A nice bit of roast goat would come in handy for the dinner to-morrow, so it would. And don't forget a couple of breshuls of sods of turf from the clamp down there."

"I won't do no such thing, da. That's the priest's turf. Me ma says——"

"I don't give a thraneen if 'twas the Pope's turf itself. 'Tis great theologians yourself and your ma is, to be sure. Mebbe the next thing she'll be saying is that 'tis a sin to stab a salmon with a dung-fork at the weir of Owenmore, let alone a landlord or a Bible-reader itself."

Rosanna stepped back a few paces further, and then turning her back deliberately on her father, glanced at

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him over her shoulder, stuck out her tongue, and after making a nasty gesture with her pursed lips, vulgarly yclept "giving the raspberry," tilted her red petticoat almost to her thighs, simultaneously making a suggestive gesture with her buttocks.

The tinker advanced a few steps towards his daughter, then stopped, and shook his fist to the accompaniment of foul oaths.

"I'll pick a long thick rod of sloc na mara¹ on my ways this minute, and I'll belt blazes out of you if I don't see the turf and me coming back."

(2)

"What's that your father said about Darrell Figgis and wild goats?" I asked Rosanna after Darby Donnellan had vanished round the corner of a hillock.

"Well, 'tis this ways. Me old da isn't no good for running after them wild goats. 'Tis how he's not limber enough on the legs, and so when he wants a wild goat for the supper he makes me go hunting for them with Darrell Figgis."

"Oh! I forgot that Darrell Figgis lives somewhere in Achill. Where is his house?"

"That's his cottage on the bray above the headland opposite Innishgallun."

"How did your father get to know him?"

"Didn't you hear tell that the two of them is poets?" she said with an expression of amused surprise that revealed her strong white teeth—the most striking feature of a coarsely handsome face.

"Well, yes. That is to say—to be sure I did."

"'Tisn't how I'd compare me old da with Mr. Figgis. Me da is only a penny poet, singing ballads at fairs and

¹ Gaelic for seaweed.

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races and patterns and the likes, but Mr. Figgis prints his songs in grand English books for the lords and ladies and the rich horse-trainers and bookies in London. Only he can't send them across the big sea now on account of the wars, fearing they might be drowned by the submarines, and that's why he has to go catching wild goats on the cliffs and to go fishing for pollagh and mackerel and herrings to make a living. But if the wars was over, Mr. Figgis could send his songs across the seas again. They're grand songs to be sure. Tell me, now, did you ever read any of my da's penny sheets?"

"No, Rosanna. But I have heard him singing on fairs and market days."

Rosanna shook her head contemptuously.

"Well, there isn't big money in poetry anyways. Even Mr. Figgis doesn't make a lot out of his songs, although they are grand itself, he tells me. But only for what he steals, my da couldn't live on his songs. A very good day at a fair or pattern I seen him sell up to a pound's worth of penny ballads, but then he'd get blind parlatic after that. That's why they calls him Darby the Drouth. He wrote some grand songs about race-horses and swift hounds and hangings and prize-fights. But the best song he sings and the one he makes most money on, barring one about the great patriot, James Lynchéhaun, is one about his own great-grandda was hung forinst the public in Castlebar for sheep-stealing. 'Tis a grand song surely about how his great-grandda—that's my great-great-grandda, was half an hour getting his death at the butt of the rope—him kicking and twisting in his death-grips. I only mind one verse of it—how's this it goes—aye:

'Ye tinkers all who roam the roads, be warned by my sad fate;

Stop stealing hens and turf and geese before it is too late.

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And when you hear me choke and kick as in the noose I
die,
Pray for the soul of Darby Donnellan when in the grave
I lie.'"

"Yes—I heard that song before, Rosanna."

"And don't you think it's a grand song—a darling song?"

"I do indeed, Rosanna. There's a great deal of go about it."

"That's it, now. You took the words out of my mouth. You now, and you coming from the grand cities of the world, to be sure you often seen a man hung—did you?"

"Well—no, Rosanna. I never saw a man hung, I'm glad to say. I wouldn't like to see such a dreadful spectacle."

Rosanna stared at me aghast.

"Well, wouldn't you now? It's queer, so it is, the ways some people takes their pleasure. Myself, I'd think it a grand sight to see a man hung. I seen a dog hung once, but me da says it's not the same thing at all at all as seeing a Christian hung. Now there's a returned Yank living at the butt of the Reek says he seen a man hung in America for horse-stealing. To bring the man riding on horseback they done under a big tree, and they put a rope round his neck and tied the other end to a branch of the tree, and then they gave the horse a skelp across the arse, and the man was left kicking in the air, turning round and round for a long time the ways of a pegging top before——"

"Tell me this, Rosanna," I interposed, in order to deflect the macabre trend of her thoughts. "Do you like Mr. Figgis?"

"Mr. Figgis is a darling man, so he is. And 'tis how he'd be a very good-looking man, too, only for that old red whiskers is like the tail of a fox. Only I like his red

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hair on his poll, though me da says 'tis the colour of a cow's tail. I dunno if you ever seen Mr. Figgis, now, did you?"

"Oh! I know Mr. Figgis very well. And as I'm in Achill I think I'll join you and him in your hunt for wild goats. And I'd like to see Mrs. Figgis, too. She's an old friend of mine."

"Now that will be grand, surely. Mrs. Figgis is terrible kind to me, and 'tis how she tried to teach me the A B C, but I'm no good of a scholar."

"Do you mean to tell me that you can't read, Rosanna?"

"The sorra word I can read nor spell. But sure now, 'tisn't easy for a tramp-tinker's daughter to go to school, and me only a week here, and a week there. 'Tis only when there's no fairs and races anywhere that me da takes me to Boynmore where me ma lives."

"But why don't you stay with your mother, Rosanna?"

"Well, I do that at odd times. But most of the time me old da brings me round with him for me to dance jigs at fairs and the likes while he plays the fiddle. Me old da plays grand, and it's queer that he can near make the fiddle talk when the porter is well up in him. 'Tis easy keeping time to his playing. To hear him at 'Pop goes the Weasel' or 'Judy Callaghan' or the 'Moddhereen Rhu,'¹ 'tis how any girl couldn't help lepping to her feet, I'll say that for him if he is a rotten drought itself."

"Well, perhaps you will dance a jig for us this evening, Rosanna—will you?"

"I will, and welcome, if you ask me old da to bring his fiddle to Mr. Figgis's cottage. Mr. Figgis and Mrs. Figgis always likes to get me to dance for them. Only me da is wild mad now because I wouldn't steal the

¹ Gaelic. "The little red Fox."

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priest's turf, but mebbe 'tis how he'll disremember it all, and him coming back with the milk. But if he has a sloc na mara switch—— But look, for God's sake, at the jackass, the ways he is letting up one ear first, and the other down and then cocking up the two of them together. That asaleen has as much brains as a Christian, and he can smell a peeler a mile away, the ways a weasel would a rat. Now I bet Old Poteen or mebbe the sergeant himself is handy somewhere about. 'Tis how Old Poteen is always bothering poor Mr. Figgis and——”

“You seem very fond of Mr. Figgis, Rosanna.”

“I am that and of herself too. He'd never give a girl a clout on the lug, and herself always has a cup of tea for me or an apple or an orange or a stick of peggy's leg or a cut of sweet cake. And it's grand to hear the English Mr. Figgis lets out of him, the likes you'd hear from a priest or the R.M. or the D.I. or the gauger, or the Archbishop of Tuam himself and him coming round to confirm the gosoors and call down the curse of God on the night-walkers and the droughts and the scandal-givers and the poteen-makers of the parish. Mebbe it's how you'll hear grand argufying this evening between himself and Major Mac Bride. You know Major Mac Bride, to be sure—he's one of the Mac Brides of Westport Quay at the butt of Clew Bay—him that helped Kroojer in the great wars against England. And me da was in the Connaught Rangers fighting against Major Mac Bride.”

“Yes—he's a distant relation of mine, Rosanna. But, I say—isn't that your father coming along over the brow of the hill?”

“'Tis surely, and if he hasn't Old Poteen from the barracks beyond with him! Now what did I tell you about that knowledgeable little asaleen? 'Tis how me

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da bought that same asaleen from a Wicklow tinker at the last Leopardstown Races, and the Wicklow tinker said that the animal was so passremarkable about peelers by dint of belonging to the breed of the ass that carried Our Lady and the Holy Child across the desert into Egypt. But me da says that that's all pishrogues, and that 'tis how the asaleen smells the Day and Martin's blacking a mile away on peelers' boots. A twin foal that asaleen is with the one that Padraig O'Conaire, the great London poet, puts to the little green cart that he bought from me da. I mind the day me ma told me all about the ways me da made two ass-carts out of the railway signal-cabin. But, asthore, I'm moidered now what Old Poteen is doing with me da."

"I suppose the constable caught him milking the cow!"

"Mebbe he did, and mebbe he didn't. But if he did catch him milking the cow itself, 'tisn't how he'd say nothing, because me da is a spotter for the polis, and Old Poteen thinks that Darrell Figgis is feeding the soldiers in the German submarines with wild goats and pollagh and giving them petrol too. And so he comes regular to me da looking for information. But whisht now—here they are."

(3)

"Rosaneen, you shlam og sallagh!¹ This tea is as thick as soup, so 'tis."

"And small blame to it if it is itself, and it pulling all the time the pair of ye was gawsthering and ye taking your ease along the bohreen."

"'Tisn't the ways I care a thraneen if 'twas as thick as stirabout, but when I ask an old friend to tea——"

¹ Gaelic. "Dirty young slut."

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"Arrah, listen to him, Rosaneen agrasheen," cut in the constable. "I like the tea middling well pulled. And begob, Rosaneen, 'tis growing big you are. God bless you! Do you mind when I was stationed in Boynmore, and you playing with dolls? Only a few years more and you'll be running after the men. Though begob it's them that'll do the running after you. Swarming round you they'll be like flies round a cow-dung. And now, Rosaneen, you might be after introducing me to the gentleman."

"My name is Griffin," I said.

"You wouldn't be an Achill man now—would you?"

"I was born in Boynmore."

The policeman was lost in deep thought for a few minutes.

"There isn't no Griffins in Boynmore now. There never was only one of the name there in living memory barring Doctor Griffin, and he's dead over six years."

"I'm his son."

The constable's face lit up.

"You wouldn't be the one the pig nearly ate alive and you a gosoor?"

"I am."

"'Twas me ma that saved you from being ate by that same pig," cut in Rosanna. "That was when she was married to Pat Moran—her first husband."

"Aye, to be sure. I mind it all now," said the constable. "Bridget Donnellan—she was then Bridget Moran—was your nurse. You're Rosanna's milk-brother, so you are. I disremembered it all till this minute, but it comes back to me now. And while they were arguing whether a pig that bit a Christian should be killed, didn't the old pig die of the dancing staggers? Aye, I mind it all now. And now, I suppose, 'tis for the grand air that's here that you came to Achill, isn't it?"

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"No, I came for the pollagh-fishing."

"Well now, now, and it's great pastime that same pollagh-fishing. And a nice tasty fish, too, pollagh is. So that's your boat, then—the white one."

"No, the black hooker is mine with the brown sails."

"Aye, I see, I see. Then the white one will be Major Mac Bride's? You know Major Mac Bride—him that fought with Colonel Lynch's Irish Brigade on the side of Kroojer in the South African War—don't you?"

"Yes, I have known Major Mac Bride and his family as long as I can remember."

"I'm told he makes big money with a big job he has from the Dublin Port and Docks Board or something the likes of that, and that he doesn't meddle in politics now at all at all. Mebbe 'tis how after a bit he would help the recruiting movement for the British Army the likes of Colonel Lynch under whom he served in the Irish Brigade that went from America to help Kroojer."

"I really know nothing about Major Mac Bride's politics. He is not a very communicative man."

"You took the words out of my mouth. He is not a communicative man. He—begob——"

He stopped suddenly, and started fumbling first in the pockets of his tunic and then in his trousers pockets.

"Well, bedam, but if I haven't left the old pipe at home. Rosaneen agrasheen, would you mind running down and asking the missus to give you my old pipe which is on the kitchen dresser? And here's a few coppers now for yourself to buy conversation lozenges or bulls'-eyes at the Widow O'Grady's."

Rosanna, after a perfunctory gauche gesture of refusal, accepted the proffered coppers with an inaudible murmur of thanks, and started off at a jog-trot down the heathery slope.

"There isn't no use in letting gosoors know too

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much," soliloquised the constable as the girl vanished round a bend of the hill.

After a few minutes of moody silence, he resumed:

"Begob, but I never heard a finer prescription in my born puff of the same Major Mac Bride. That's him indeed—he's a dark, silent man. And now that he is getting on in years a bit, he has got sense. But between me and you, there's a man here in this island, and I don't like his capers—and that's Darrell Figgis."

"Why don't you like Mr. Figgis?"

"Well, now, between you and me, I have strong grounds for suspecting that he is conspiring with the German submarines against the Defence of the Realm Act."

"What proof have you of all this?"

"Well, now, will you just look at that queer yoke he has above his chimney pot there?"

He pointed towards Darrell Figgis's cottage. A patent device, technically known as a "monk's hood," I believe, was revolving from its solitary chimney-pot.

"Well, what about it?" I asked.

"That yoke is for signalling to the German submarines."

"Nonsense! That's just a gadget to prevent the smoke blowing down the chimney during a gale."

"Well now, well now, and do you tell me? Well, I never seen the likes before, nor did anyone else at the barracks. And 'tis only since the German submarines came into Clew Bay that he put up that yoke. Look at the way it twists in the wind now."

"It's meant to do that. Well—any other proofs that Darrell Figgis is in league with the German submarine commanders?"

"He's a poet. Is that proof enough?"

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His broad palm fluttered abroad with a sweeping gesture of finality.

“A poet is not necessarily a rebel,” I countered with a smile.

“All poets is rebels. Isn’t the Dublin rebel movement lousy with poets? And isn’t—but will you look now again at that yoke on Darrell Figgis’s chimney-pot, and will you still tell me that it’s not the ways he is signalling codes to the Germans? Didn’t he row out a week gone with a curragh full of wild goats’ carcases out beyond the Cathedral Cliffs? And didn’t he take cans of petrol galore out to them another night? Ask Darby there! But, begob, what’s that? Did you hear a whistle now? Aye, there ’tis again. ’Tis one of the men at the barracks, wanting me back. There’s some trouble or other, I’m afeared. Darby, tell Rosaneen to bring back my old pipe again to the missus.”

He sprang to his feet, and started off at a clumsy canter for the barracks.

“Darby, did you tell that fat fool that silly yarn about Darrell Figgis?” I said when the policeman was out of sight.

Darby shrugged his shoulders.

“I can always get a good creamy pint out of him by dint of the lies I do be stuffing into him, the bloody loodramaun. He’s going daft looking for the stripes for many a year.”

“But it’s very unfair to Darrell Figgis, Darby. He may be arrested one of these days on account of your malicious lies.”

The tinker spat softly into the peat ashes.

“I don’t care a thraneen if he was shot itself. The likes of him sneering at my songs, and the sorra head nor tail I can make of a line himself ever wrote. To the devil with himself and his bloody foxy hair and whiskers!”

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He looks the likes of a man would be after running through hell with his hat off."

"Well, Darby, as you have painted such a lurid picture about Darrell Figgis's negotiations with the German submarines, I presume that you have also told this foolish policeman some fancy yarns about me. Not that I blame you, if thereby you can get a few pints. You're welcome to them."

"There isn't no need for me telling him anything about you. He knows all about you, and has invented a lot more in his imagination. He knew who you were all the time he was letting on to be waiting to be introduced to you. He knows you have been in the King's uniform, but he is bothering his brains whether you are home on furlough, or whether it's the ways you are invalided out, or whether 'tis how you have deserted, and are down here helping Darrell Figgis to feed the German submarines with wild goats and pollagh. 'Tis thinking I am he hopes to get the stripes by proving that you are collaging with the Germans."

"But if he thinks that I may be helping Darrell Figgis in his pro-German activities, why did he show his hand so plainly? Why did he tell me of his suspicions about Darrell Figgis?"

"He knows well that Figgis knows about his suspicions long ago, and doesn't give a damn for him. Old Figgis is laughing like blazes at him and all the peelers in Ireland. Figgis hasn't nothing to do with the Volunteers now. He left them soon after the split with John Redmond. But the polis is fools, as they always was. To hell with them, anyways! Peelers and volunteers and priests and gombeen men is all burjoisy, and is enemies of the proletariat."

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(4)

Rosanna ran ahead of me, chasing before her along the cliffs which beetled over the sea about a dozen wild goats whose startled bleatings rang antiphonic changes with the angry cries of a colony of puffins and gulls soaring aloft with whirring wings from the face of the perpendicular precipice rising sheer from the dizzily deep waters beneath. The goats careered madly ahead until they were confronted by a steep rampart of granite forming one of the walls of a mountain ravine which deflected inland to the left. Without hesitation they darted up the ravine, which was now dry, but was the bed of a roaring torrent in wet weather.

When she had shepherded the animals into this canyon, she waited for me, marking time by dancing a jig to the tune of "Pop goes the weasel" which she lilted softly with her clear young voice.

"That's Mr. Figgis up there at the top of the glen," she said, pointing up the ravine. "When I call to him, he'll stop the goats. Don't you see him?"

"Where? I can't see anybody."

"Do you see that lonesome rock at the peak of the glen now?"

"Yes. I see the rock. Well?"

"That's him at the butt of the rock. Don't you see him plain now? Sitting down at the butt of the rock he is, reading a book, waiting for me to let a shout at him, and then 'tis how he'll rise and stop the goats from getting out at the top of the glen. That's the ways we always catch them."

She cupped her hands round her mouth, and shouted:

"Mr. Figgis, your honour! Mr. Figgis, your honour!"

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Suddenly I fancied that the brown bracken at the base of the rock on which my eyes were riveted, swelled up from the ground. Presently it took human shape, and I saw that it was Darrell Figgis, whose protective coloration of brown Irish homespun, red hair and red beard toned into the brown tints of the heather and withered acrid sea-grasses.

"All right, Rosanna! Drive them along," rang his voice clearly along the ravine.

With a wild whoop Rosanna chased the goats headlong up the narrowing funnel of the gully. Presently Darrell Figgis's outstretched arms captured the two foremost animals which struggled desperately but unavailingly to the accompaniment of pathetic bleating to shake off his grip. The other goats promptly turned tail, and with the courage of despair charged towards Rosanna. One of them ran between her legs, causing her to execute a fantastic caper which was a compromise between a cartwheel and a somersault. She spun round two or three times, her exiguous red petticoat swirling like a flame around her thighs, but she managed to grab a goat that dashed past her just as she had recovered her balance. I made a desperate but unavailing effort to grab one of the other animals as they scurried madly to the right and left towards the mouth of the gully.

"Are you hurt, Rosanna?" I enquired anxiously.

"The sorra hurt. Didn't you catch no goat?"

"No," I replied contritely.

"Townspeople has butter fingers," she sniffed contemptuously. "See how I caught a goat and me after being knocked out of my standing."

"Your knees and shins are cut, Rosanna."

"That's all equal. I'll rub a bit of cowdung into them and us going home."

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(5)

*"The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down."*

This couplet from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" flashed across my mind as I saw Major Mac Bride and Rosanna Donnellan dancing a non-stop Irish jig, or rather a series of Irish jigs to the successive strains of "Nora Creina," "Pop goes the Weasel," "The Moddhereen Rhu," "Judy Callaghan" and "Did you ever see the Devil and his Tail cocked up?" which merged without a break into one another under the vigorous, rather than virtuosic performance of Darby the Drouth on his violin.

A nation's folk-dances and folk-songs are the most primitive and naïve expression of its temperament. Now the Irish temperament, like the Irish skies, is quick to change from sunshine to storm-cloud—to merge swiftly from exuberant gaiety into abysmal depression. And the Irish jig soars to the zenith of Hibernian hilarity, just as the Irish caoin¹ sinks to the nadir of Hibernian gloom.

There is nothing sensual or erotic about the Irish jig; it is just an expression of the ebullition of *joie de vivre*—of that exuberance of animal spirits which makes birds sing, lambs skip and puppies chase their own tails. Physical well-being, agility and endurance are essential to its adequate interpretation by a performer, and the flabby Irish bouchal² and the anaemic Irish colleen who do not possess these qualities would be better advised to crawl round a ballroom in a "fox-trot" or a "blues" to the bleak bleating of a saxophone and the eunuchoid droolings of a crooner.

¹ Gaelic. A funeral wail.

² Gaelic. A boy.

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Major Mac Bride, being middle-aged and stocky, had not the staying powers of the slim, barefooted child Rosanna, whose long shapely legs, mottled from crouching over peat fires, leaped swiftly in exact time to the music. He stuck it out bravely through "Nora Creina," "Pop goes the Weasel" and "The Moddhieren Rhu." The accelerated tempo of that tempestuous jig, "Judy Callaghan," winded him, and he sagged in a limp heap into a creaking basket-chair, as the tinker struck up the last item of his repertoire, accompanying his performance with rhythmic swaying of his gaunt muscular frame and a vocal obbligato in an alcoholic baritone:

"Did you ever see the devil and his tail cocked up?
Did you ever see the devil and his tail cocked up?
Did you ever see the devil and him riding on a griddle,
And him playing on a fiddle with his tail cocked up?"

"Arish! Arish!"¹ shouted Darrell Figgis and Major Mac Bride, as Rosanna at length ceased her lithe performance, and subsided cross-legged on the floor, not through exhaustion, but because her father had stopped playing to plunge his face into a jug of porter.

"Let the child get her breath, Darrell," said Mrs. Figgis, a kindly looking, tired little Englishwoman, who looked strangely out of place in her Gaelic environment. "She dances divinely, Darrell. Don't you think so, Major Mac Bride?"

"The best I have ever seen, Mrs. Figgis. She interprets the spirit of the Irish jig. If you excuse me using a platitude, her rendering is sheer poetry of motion."

"She knocked you out, Major," laughed Mrs. Figgis.

"She did indeed, Mrs. Figgis. I'm utterly exhausted."

¹ Gaelic. "Again."

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"You'll dance again, dear, after you have had a rest, won't you?" said Mrs. Figgis, patting Rosanna's head.

"If me da plays again, 'tis how—"

"Have you e'er another sup of porter on you, woman of the house agraah?" cut in the tinker: "that sup had a fine head on it, ma'm."

"Oh! Darby, I'm ever so sorry. There isn't another drop of porter in the house," replied Mrs. Figgis, looking very disconcerted.

"Th'onam an diaoul, van a thi,"¹ snarled the tinker in an undertone with an ugly rictus of his scarred face.

"Come on, da, and rise another tune," said Rosanna, springing to her feet and tugging his sleeve petulantly, while her cheeks went crimson. "Play 'Pop goes the Weasel' again."

"Pop goes the devil!" growled the tinker, giving his daughter a dirty look. "I'll give them 'Thoroo a Warralla.' It's what the likes of them—"

"You won't do no such thing as play 'Thoroo a Warralla,'" cut in Rosanna emphatically, her colour deepening. "You have no call to play it here, in a flohool house the likes of this, where there's alway flows of porter for them that isn't rotten droughts altogether."

"Why not let him play 'Thoroo a Warralla,' Rosanna?" I interposed. "It's a dance-tune, isn't it?"

"'Thoroo a Warralla,' if you haven't forgotten your Irish, means 'The Funeral of the Barrel,'" whispered Darrel Figgis in an aside to me. "Rosanna thinks that under the circumstances the tune would be too pointedly topical."

"'Tis a song about a barrel of porter that ran dry during a wake," chimed in Rosanna nervously. "And him to play it here, 'tis how it would be an insult to—"

¹ Gaelic. "Your soul to the devil, woman of the house."

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"Insult be damned!" barked the tinker, moving towards the door. "Well, now, 'tis this way it is. Curse the tune at all I'll play now in this niggardly house. Playing the fiddle is middling droughty work—so 'tis."

"How could you be droughty, and you only after lowering the heel of a quart?" retorted Rosanna, her eyes flashing.

The tinker spat savagely on the carpet.

"Huh! huh! A quart begob! 'Tis only like a daisy in a cow's belly to a man with a middling thirst. And you can't give the proper go to a jig or a reel on the fiddle barring your heart is heightened with porter. I'm going home to hell out of this."

He swung the door open savagely. A moment later it slammed behind him.

A long awkward silence, broken by fitful sobs of confusion and mortification from Rosanna, followed his abrupt exit.

"Don't cry, Rosanna," said Mrs. Figgis in motherly tones. "Come out to the kitchen with me, and we'll have a cup of nice tea and some of that lovely sultana cake you are so fond of. Major Mac Bride brought me a lovely fresh one from Westport. And what's more, I want to make another attempt to teach you the alphabet. We'll leave the men to talk politics—God help them!"

(6)

We sat for some minutes staring into the glowing coals during the spell of silence that followed the exit of Mrs. Figgis and Rosanna. Intermittent sobs from the girl, punctuated by soothing words by Mrs. Figgis, came from the direction of the kitchen.

"That tinker is a very crude brute," remarked John

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Mac Bride as the sounds of lamentation eventually died away. "Why does the girl put up with him? She has a good mother, and I wonder why she does not stay with her."

"That's so, John, but she has the nomad strain of the tinkers in her blood. She likes camping out, and rambling from one town to another. Furthermore, even if she wanted to stay at home, Darby would not allow her to do so. He finds her far too useful in many ways. And then she would have a very lonely time at home, as her mother is out all day doing odd jobs. She is a reliable and honest worker."

"Rosanna is very young yet, Darrell, but if she keeps stravaiging through the country with Darby, she will become as demoralised as he is himself. As it is, she has a rather crude ethical code of her own—but it is an ethical code of sorts. Like all her breed she will cadge and steal, but there are limitations to her depredations."

"Yes, John, she has amused my wife immensely by confiding in her about her scruples with regard to certain matters. For instance, while, in her own vivid phrasing, she would not hesitate to steal turf from a farmer, she would not dream of touching the priest's turf-stack. Furthermore, while she would surreptitiously milk a cow, she has always refused to comply with her father's orders to raid clothes-lines. Darby, on the other hand, has even stolen Father Tom O'Hara's shirt while it was airing on a furze-bush, and has pushed cynicism to the extent of leaving his own vermin-ridden garment in lieu of it. Again Rosanna, despite beatings galore, has always refused to co-operate with Darby in the circulation of spurious shillings and half-crowns, and would on no account steal goods from shops. That she is scrupulous in other matters, too, is shown by a question she asked Mrs. Figgis a few days

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ago. 'Is it a sin, mam,' she asked, 'to shoot a landlord on Sunday?'"

"Well, Darrell, that shows that she was rather scrupulous about breaking the Sabbath, even if she was not ultra-squeamish about murder."

"And her outlook with regard to the rights of property is unique too, John. She has so far adopted her father's Communistic ideas that she will steal turf or milk a cow belonging to a strong farmer, or will even swim out a hundred yards to sea to rob a lobster-pot. I have seen her frequently myself getting out of her scanty attire while you'd wink—that ragged red petticoat is her sole nether garment—and diving into the sea in her bare pelt and reaching the floats with a few dexterous strokes. I plead guilty to having been a receiver of stolen goods in this respect a couple of times. Had she tried to sell me the lobsters, I would have told her plainly that she was a little thief, but when she made a present of them to me—well, it was rather embarrassing. She is a very sensitive girl, I have discovered, and very quick to take umbrage. Well, let us drop the subject of Rosanna for the present, and talk of something else. You have come from the city recently, Gerald. Have you any news?"

(7)

"Well, your friends in Dublin and London are wondering what has become of you, Figgis. They say you have become an anchorite of the desert; that you are going to found an austere religious order of your own."

Figgis shook his head and sighed.

"You can tell my friends in Dublin and London that my abode in the desert is the result of sheer inevitable

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circumstances. Because I tried to keep controversy out of the ranks of the Mayo brigade of the Volunteers I have been dropped by both sides—repudiated by the rebel section, the MacNeill Volunteers, and cold-shouldered by John Redmond's body, the National Volunteers. And so I have settled down here to do a bit of writing. I have three contracts for books with London publishers, and until at least one of them is published, my wife and myself have to supplement our rapidly shrinking exchequer by stocking our larder with the flesh of wild goats and with fish and game. Luckily there is enough and to spare of all three. And then turf is very cheap as well as very cheerful fuel."

"So you are cut off completely from all contact with Irish politics, are you?"

"Utterly and completely cut off. Dublin Castle, however, labours under the hallucination that the fact that I am living on the western coast of Ireland while the German submarines are prowling in the Atlantic is of very sinister significance. Every little creek of this promontory on which I have built my cottage is searched every day for evidence of the presence of German submarines with which I am supposed to be negotiating. And I suppose you have heard about my chimney-cowl, have you?"

"Oh, yes; a policeman was just talking to me about it about an hour ago."

Darrell Figgis smiled and shook his head.

"Oh! That was that poor simpleton, 'Constable Poteen,' or 'Old Poteen,' as the people here have nicknamed him, on account of his craze for tracking down the illicit stills. When I put up that contraption first, all the police from the barracks used to come along the hills behind my cottage examining it through their glasses. The others gave it up long ago, but Old Poteen

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is still anxious to find out what particular type of a signalling apparatus it is."

"Yes; Darby the Drouth is largely responsible for Old Poteen's obsession," I remarked.

"Darby the Drouth would tell any sort of a yarn for a pint of porter," said Major Mac Bride. "I suppose I am also suspected of intriguing with the German submarine commander, especially after my visit to Darrell."

"As a matter of fact, Old Poteen expressed the view to me that you have no connection with any revolutionary movement now," I said. "He says that you had your fling with the Irish Brigade in the South African War, and that he would not be surprised to hear one of these days that you had decided to back your old superior officer, Colonel Arthur Lynch, in the recruiting campaign for the British Army."

Major Mac Bride smiled cynically.

"Arthur Lynch believes honestly, but foolishly, that he is furthering the interests of Ireland by supporting the recruiting campaign. I don't, because I don't believe that Asquith ever means to enforce the 'Act which is safe on the statute book.' There never was an honest Liberal since Gladstone's day. My only reason for not having anything to do with the present-day revolutionary movement is that I don't think the young fellows who are strutting around Dublin mean business. They are just a lot of tin-soldiers."

"That is the attitude adopted towards them by the Irish people as a whole," said Figgis. "Oh, by the way, you both heard how Birrell enjoyed looking on at a mock attack made on Dublin Castle by Tom Mac-Donagh with the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, did you?"

"Oh, the whole world heard about that," said Major

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Mac Bride. "It is the type of a joke that the genial essayist would enjoy. And I agree with Birrell. I regard Tom MacDonagh and Pearse and the whole lot of them as a huge joke. But if I thought they meant business——"

He stopped abruptly, and his face assumed a very grim expression.

"Well," I countered, "if you thought they meant business, what would you do?"

"I'd join them," he replied quietly. "And if they ever do take the field—which I don't believe they ever will, I will immediately join them—in the rôle of a private soldier."

"Mind you, Mac Bride, I would not be at all surprised if, some time soon, the Volunteers made some desperate gesture in the way of rebellion," said Figgis after a pause. "You see, they have been put in rather a ridiculous position on many occasions during the past couple of years owing to the fact that they have had to be protected by the police against the fury of the mob. You remember the scenes in Limerick on Whit Sunday last year when a parade of Irish Volunteers had to be protected by the Royal Irish Constabulary from the violence of the citizens. And, mind you, the Volunteers were over a thousand strong and were well armed. But for all that as they were returning to the station through the Irish town quarter—the most typically Irish part of Limerick—they were furiously attacked by crowds of women and were only saved from an ignominious rout by the timely intervention of a large body of police. And then on another——"

"But what is all this apropos of, Darrell?" cut in Major Mac Bride.

"Oh! I want to point out, John, that the Irish Volunteers will probably get tired of being protected by the police and that they will make a desperate stand against

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England's might; where, I have no idea. Their rising will be stamped out quickly and with much bloodshed, and a lot of executions will follow in its wake. The tragedy of Robert Emmet's rising and of the risings of '48 and '67 will be repeated. Yet another hopeless gesture against Britain's might!"

"What makes you take such a gloomy outlook, Figgins?" I asked uneasily, as I thought I divined an uncanny note of prophecy in his tone.

"Well, a lot of things have contributed to my foreboding. One of them is the fact to which I have referred, that the Irish Volunteers are chafing against the humiliations to which they are being subjected. The position is too grotesque for those among them who have any sense of humour—the would-be liberators of Erin being protected from those whom they fain would liberate by the Constabulary of the oppressor! Another reason why I am uneasy is the fact that I have just got a letter from Sheehy-Skeffington in which he says that he does not like the look of things in Dublin. He says that the situation there is very tense, and that he is 'afraid that a storm will break.' These are his very words."

"And if the storm breaks, I'll be in the thick of it," said Major Mac Bride, as he peered through the cottage window. "And talking about storms breaking, I'm afraid, Darrell, if I don't start soon, a storm will break over Clew Bay before I'm half way to Westport. I don't like the look of the sky above Innishgallum and Clare Island, and the Connemara Mountains and Croagh Patrick are capped with heavy black clouds. I'll probably get it in the neck before I reach Murrisk."

About a fortnight later, Major Mac Bride faced a firing-squad in Wellington Barracks, in Dublin, for the

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part he took in the Easter Week Rebellion. A few days previously, Sheehy-Skeffington, from whom Darrell Figgis had received the letter full of foreboding of that outbreak which he dreaded and deplored, was shot by a firing-squad in Portobello Barracks, Dublin, side by side with two other journalists, equally innocent, as the result of an appallingly panicky blunder.

About seven years later, when I was on the editorial staff of the *Evening Herald*, Dublin, Darrell Figgis burst into the office in a state of utter prostration, and handed me a blood-stained letter which the police had found beside the body of Mrs. Figgis who had committed suicide in the Dublin Mountains.

Over a decade ago Darrell Figgis committed suicide in a Bloomsbury boarding-house a few yards distant from my flat.

Old Poteen was killed during a fight between the I.R.A. and the Black-and-Tans just on the eve of the truce between Great Britain and Ireland.

Darby the Drouth was killed with a blow from a bung-starter in a public-house brawl in the autumn of 1933. (*Vide* below, "The Tinker and the 'Bass' Battle.")

And the "knowledgeable" jackass with the uncanny flair for divining the approach of a peeler was blown sky-high by a shell from the *O'Murachoo*, ci-devant the *Helga*, during the battle of Rath-na-Copall. (*Vide* below "The Tinkers' Soviet.")

CHAPTER III

THE TINKER AND THE PROVOST OF TRINITY

*“Don’t talk of your Provost and Fellows of Trinity,
Famous for ever for Greek and Latinity,
Och! And the devils and all at divinity,
Father O’Flynn would make hares of them all.”*

A. P. GRAVES

(1)

HAVING heard vague and conflicting rumours about a rebellion somewhere in the heart of Dublin, I strolled down towards O’Connell Street in the early afternoon of Easter Monday, 1916. On my way I heard sporadic rifle-shots with occasional vicious bursts of machine-gun firing. When I came abreast of the Parnell statue I saw that the street was densely packed with curious people, looking mouth agape towards the General Post Office, one of Dublin’s most stately public buildings. Near Nelson’s Pillar I saw a dead horse. I learned from some of the crowd that shortly before a company of cavalry with lances couched had gallantly charged the G.P.O. in good old Balaclava style, but had promptly and precipitately retreated when they were greeted with a volley by the rebels which killed a rider and his horse.

To my left I saw that several shop-fronts had been staved in and their contents thrown on the pavement. A couple of street-women were leisurely fitting on pair

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after pair of shocs in a shop-window, and hurling the discarded ones through the shattered plate-glass.

A bullet wailed close to my ears. Suddenly I became conscious that I was in military uniform. I darted to the shelter of the eastern side of the massive plinth of Nelson's Pillar. I had hardly done so when a couple of Australian soldiers dashed to my side.

"Rummy business, this," said one of them with a nervous laugh and a cadaverous grin that belied his assumption of dare-devilry.

"My pal and I had just come to Dublin to see our relatives when we got caught in this," said the other Australian. "We are on leave from the Somme."

"Some leave," came the ghastly pun of his ashen-faced pal. "We were just shifted up from Wipers way, and when we get back, if ever, they say there will be proper hell let loose along the Somme. That is what they say, anyhow."

And just then another soldier—a sergeant of the Royal Irish Rifles—darted to the shelter of the plinth. Simultaneously a succession of volleys rang out from the G.P.O. The rebels seemingly were firing into the air with the intention of scaring the curious crowd that blocked the street and the looters who filled the shop windows. Their first aim was successful, as the crowd melted away in a panic into the side streets. Most of the looters, however, stuck to their windows, and the two prostitutes were still trying to fit on shoes to their taste.

"Hell roast the Fenians!" panted the sergeant of the Royal Irish Rifles, as he wedged himself in between the two Australians.

"Fenians?" I queried, surprised.

"Aye, surely," he replied in clipped Ulster tones. "Yon lads firing at us are Fenian Catholics, with the

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Jesuits and wee Joe Devlin and Tay Pay at their back. And the Germans is in it, too; I wouldn't be at all surprised before this row is over if the Pope of Rome landed in Dublin Bay from a German submarine. Well, we'll be ready for him in Belfast if he crosses the Boyne. Aye, see, them two chaps looking across at us. They've got the badges of the Dublin Fusiliers. This town is full of Catholic Fenians. See the way they are looking at us. I wouldn't say that they weren't Papal Nuncios or two of wee Joe's Molly Maguires, disguised as Dublins. All the Fusiliers are Fenians, anyway. To hell with them!"

The two soldiers, after a brief consultation together, crossed over to us. When they were almost beside us one of them focused his eyes on the badge of the Ulsterman's cap. He nudged his companion.

"Carson!" he hissed under his breath.

Just at this moment I happened to glance towards North Earl Street and saw another man in uniform frantically beckoning to us. I pointed him out to one of the Dublin Fusiliers.

"Come," said he, gripping me by the arm, "we'll see what he wants. Maybe he's got the jim-jams."

We hurried across the street, stooping as low as possible.

"You blinking idiots," snapped the man who had been signalling to us, an artillery sergeant with one arm in a sling, "what are you all standing there for? Do you think you're a mothers' meeting or what? The civvies have nearly all cleared off the streets, and if we stay here, especially in bunches, the Shinners will make cat's-meat of us. We had better buzz off to some barracks. I don't know this blasted town at all. Is there a barracks anywhere handy?"

"What about Trinity College?" suggested one of the

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Dublins. "It's quite near and there's an O.T.C. there and a school of instruction for officers."

"Good," said the artillery man. "Well, let's hop it toot de sweet, and the tooter the sweeter. Collect them blighters leaning against the pillar. Allay!"

(2)

In order to avoid passing in front of the G.P.O. we reached Trinity College by a detour by North Earl Street, Marlborough Street and Eden Quay, and thence across Butt Bridge, Tara Street and Great Brunswick Street. We tried to gain admission to the College by the Brunswick Gate, but failed, and had to enter by College Green, thereby coming once more within range of the rebels in the G.P.O. for a brief spell. A volley rang out as we crossed this exposed patch opposite Tom Moore's statue, but the bullets meant for us ricocheted off the College walls on to the pillars of the Bank of Ireland—formerly the old Irish House of Parliament.

Inside the College there were about a score of members of the Officers' Training Corps and of the School of Instruction, but they were reinforced by a goodly number of men on leave who had been caught in the vortex of the rebellion, and drifted into the College like ourselves—Dublin Fusiliers, Connaught Rangers, Munster Fusiliers, Inniskillings, Anzacs, a member of the French Foreign Legion, two marines and a sailor. We were all incorporated into a provisional "Trinity College Unit" with Captain Alton, a rotund professor of classics, and now a member of the Dail, as C.O. in lieu of Professor (now Sir Robert) Tate, who was away on holiday during the entire period of the rebellion. Lieutenant Luce of the Royal Irish Rifles, who was at

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home from the Front, was appointed provisional adjutant in lieu of Major Harris, who was enveloped by one of De Valera's strategic tentacles in Beggar's Bush Barracks until the rebellion was over.

"Where's the canteen?" barked the artillery sergeant, when he had settled down in our improvised barracks.

"There's no canteen here," said Sergeant-major Bosnay of the O.T.C. "This is a college—not a barracks."

"Pah bong, pah bong," were the opening words of the artillery man's lurid philippic in colourful "Tommy Atkinsese" on the O.T.C. of T.C.D.

"Let's go to a pub," he concluded. "Out into the blinking street again, boys. Better die of a Shinner's bullet than of blooming thirst."

"All the gates of the College are closed—the Brunswick Gate, the Lincoln Gate and the College Green Gate, and sentries are posted inside them," said the Sergeant-major with grim finality.

"And even if they weren't, all the pubs in Dublin are run by Jesuits," chimed in the Belfast man. "They'd hand you over to the Fenians in the Post Office. Maybe the Pope of Rome is there already. I'm told he landed from a submarine in Dublin Bay. And Sammy MacGroarty heard tell that T. P. O'Connor, the Jesuit popish moonlighter, is plotting to blow up the House of Commons."

"I don't care a curse," snapped the artilleryman, "I'm dying of thirst, and if I can't get stout or beer I must have a cup of tea or coffee or some bloody bilge."

"Too early yet for afternoon tea," said Sergeant-major Bosnay sarcastically, looking at his wrist-watch.

"Well, I must have something to drink—even a glass of daylow or doolay or some other rotten swill. Have you even got a pump in this bleeding kip? I must have

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something to drink—san fay reen what it is.”

“There’s a blasted Jesuit in full uniform,” shouted the Belfast man, pointing at a tall venerable figure dressed in cap and gown who was chatting with the adjutant.

“He’s the Provost of Trinity, and there is more learning in his little toe than there is in the whole city of Belfast,” said one of the Dublin Fusiliers. “He is the Reverend Dr. Mahaffy.”

“Rummy old bloke,” commented one of the Australians. “Does he always go around in those petticoats?”

“Only in the College. And there is no canteen in his College. He’s a pussyfoot.”

“Trays beens,” said the artilleryman. “Pah bong. Johnny mar. I’m going to allay out of this Sunday School toot sweet.”

(3)

The crowded events of a hectic week followed each other in rapid succession. In the dead of night we had to withdraw very quietly from the O.T.C. headquarters to the front of the College—a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile. Our intelligence department had learned that De Valera had with masterly strategy spread out his slender forces of expert marksmen (some two hundred youths all told, I believe) so very adroitly that he controlled the railway and the main roads leading to Dublin from the sea. He was in possession of Westland Row Station, the terminus of the D.S.E.R., which was close to our headquarters. As a matter of fact, the so-called “loop-line” which linked up Westland Row Station with Amiens Street, the terminus of the G.N.R. passed close to the roof of the O.T.C. headquarters. It was this ingenious envelopment that enabled De

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Valera next day to break up the 178th Infantry Brigade after it had landed at Kingstown (now Dunlaoghaire) and was proceeding to Dublin by the sea road.

Next morning the Irish Command transferred its headquarters temporarily to the front block of the buildings of Trinity College. Artillery was brought from Athlone to the College, and the guns were hurried through the Brunswick Gate into D'Olier Street under heavy fire from Pearse's men in the G.P.O. Followed the bombardment of that building.

Later on in the day the 7th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters arrived at the College, after suffering appalling losses¹ from De Valera's snipers who, after allowing their advanced guard to cross Lower Mount Street Bridge, opened fire on the main body of the regiment from four different points in houses lining the banks of the Grand Canal. Still later on in the day the Shropshire Regiment arrived in the College, but, warned by the terrible casualties that had befallen the Sherwood Foresters, they took a wide detour instead of marching straight from the sea.

The following morning all Dublin shook with the bombardment from the Liffey by the *Helga* of Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Citizen Army—those ultra-red, intransigent bedfellows of Pearse's idealists.

Liberty Hall speedily collapsed under the guns of the *Helga*, and the section of the ragtime army that manned the walls of Trinity which was sent to search the ruins for the dead and dying included myself and the two Australians and the Belfast man who had taken shelter beneath the plinth of the Nelson Pillar on Easter Monday.

After a considerable lot of trouble we worked our

¹ The casualties were: 4 officers killed; 14 seriously wounded; 216 other ranks killed or wounded.

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way among the wreckage right down to the cellar, where, crouching amid a motley assortment of loot, I found to my utter amazement a half-dozen Connaught tinkers, including Darby Donnellan and his daughter Rosanna. Rosanna made a wild spring towards me as soon as she caught a glimpse of me, and sobbing hysterically, threw her arms around my neck. As she did so, I noticed that she was wearing an expensive fur coat.

"Don't let the soldiers kill me, asthore, and I'll say the Rosary for you this blessed night," she sobbed. "'Twas me old da made me steal this coat, agrah machree, and he stole all before him, and——"

"I stole nothing," cut in the tinker truculently as he advanced towards me, brandishing a revolver menacingly. "I only expropriated the instruments and means of production of the burjoisy, and——"

But just then an upper-cut under the chin delivered deftly by the Belfast man laid the tinker prone on the dirty floor of the cellar.

"Boys-o-boys! I've killed the bloody Jesuit!" guffawed the Belfast man.

Rosanna, still clinging frantically to me for protection, ceased weeping and gazed with an expression of utter indifference at her prostrate parent.

"'Tis killed he is and small loss, too," she said, half to herself. "No, he's coming to again—the old scut!"

"Come on, Rosanna. I'll look after you," I said reassuringly as I gently extricated myself from her slobbering embrace. "We must get out of here."

"Hands up, you Fenian bastards!" barked the Belfast man.

About a dozen grimy hands shot upwards.

"Griffin, you hold on to that young Jesuit bitch! She might do a bunk," chipped in the Belfast man, as we moved into Beresford Place.

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(4)

A species of mammoth constables, the Dublin Metropolitan Police, better known by their abbreviated title, the D.M.P., became extinct with the passing of British rule in Ireland. They had no connection whatsoever with the Royal Irish Constabulary, the famous dapper R.I.C. The D.M.P. were all over six feet high, were garbed as policemen, and carried no weapon save a truncheon, which, however, they were only too ready to wield with a trenchant zest against all and sundry who dared impede them in the execution of their duty. They were paid by the Dublin Corporation, but were controlled by Dublin Castle.

The R.I.C. were a semi-military force, dressed in trim-fitting bottle-green uniforms, and trained in the use of the bayonet, rifle and revolver. Their headquarters were called "barracks," while those of the D.M.P. were known as "stations." The officers of the R.I.C. wore a uniform of a smart military cut with Sam Browne belt and sword; the D.M.P. officers were attired like their men, but carried a cane and a pair of gloves instead of a truncheon.

The "G" men were the detective section of the D.M.P. Some of them specialised in looking after political agitators, but most of them were kept exceedingly busy looking after the criminal element of Dublin slumdom and the hordes of English crooks who landed at Dunlaoghaire on the eve of the great Irish race meetings. The "G" men wore no uniform, but mufti was a mere pathetic pretence at disguising their profession, for their towering cyclopean bulk and their enormous feet always gave them away.

The Easter Week Rebellion had just run half its

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course when three of those now extinct mastodons loomed into No. 3 Trinity College, where a sort of clearing-house had been set up by the Intelligence Department of the Irish Command for the purpose of separating the rebels from the flotsam and jetsam who availed themselves of the political upheaval to do a spot of looting. Two of these detectives were experts on the political side; the third, our old friend Sergeant John Barton, the Hercules with a beetroot complexion and drooping shoulders, specialised on Dublin slumbirds and cross-channel crooks. Barton, incidentally, was shot dead ten years later by the I.R.A. in the Black-and-Tan struggle. It seems that Dublin Castle, aware of his brilliance as a sleuth-hound, had snatched him off the scent of ordinary delinquents and put him on the trail of the I.R.A. The latter, however, had an equally high opinion of "Johnny Barton's" genius, and got rid of him immediately after his transfer. Michael Collins decided that, in his new rôle, Johnny would be too dangerous to be allowed to live.

Barton, followed by the political detectives, slouched, his tongue lolling sideways from his cynical mouth, into a room closely packed higgledy-piggledy with defiant, burning-eyed young rebels, and the off-scourings of the Dublin underworld. His task was to "spot" the native and exotic scum, the history of every one of whom he knew by heart. When he had done so, a process of elimination would enable his two colleagues to sort out the men doomed for the firing-squad and for penal servitude.

Barton removed his hat after he had dodged leisurely into the room, and nodded nonchalantly to the presiding officer who was seated at a table piled with papers. The blend of inferiority complex and trade jealousy that is characteristic of the policeman in the presence

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of the soldier made Barton exult inwardly that, being in mufti, he would not have to give the military salute.

A murmur passed among the crowd of sinister-looking Dublin slum rats: "Johnny Barton, begob!" The young rebels eyed him with cold indifference, and then looked past him with a glare of contempt and defiance. Barton eyed the crowd before him appraisingly, his tongue all the time lolling between his mobile slavering lips.

"Your name, please?" said the presiding officer icily.

"Detective-sergeant John Barton of the 'G' Division of the Metropolitan Police Force."

"You specialise in crime, I understand, Sergeant Barton," went on the officer.

"Yes, sir. Ordinary crime—not political offences," replied Barton with a slow, languid drawl.

The officer surveyed the mammoth policeman from head to foot with studied cynicism.

"I can't see much difference between ordinary and political crime—can you?"

Sergeant Barton shifted his lolling tongue to the other side of his mouth.

"Well, sir, Sir Edward Carson was a political offender when he stirred up the Curragh Mutiny, but I wouldn't say he was an ordinary criminal."

"You'd call him an extraordinary criminal—eh?"

"I didn't say that, sir," replied Barton sharply, his colour deepening. "I merely stated that I dealt with ordinary criminals only. I am not interested in political criminals. I know nothing about them. There's other men in the force for that purpose."

"Very well. Do you recognise any ordinary criminals here? Look round the room."

"Lots," came the curt reply.

"How many?"

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Barton gave another swift glance around the room.

"About a score," he said languidly. "They are just common Dublin corner-boys and pickpockets. But there's one of them that's a dangerous criminal—that big, black-looking blackguard in the corner with the scarred face—Darby Donnellan, a Mayo tinsmith, better known as Darby the Drouth."

"Darby the——"

"Darby the Drouth, sir, a name they gave him by dint of the power of drink he can lower without getting flattened out. He has a very bad record."

"Let us have it."

Barton picked a bulky notebook out of his pocket, and having released a broad elastic band that held it together, turned over the pages by jabbing at the lower left hand corners with a thumb which he intermittently moistened against his lolling tongue.

"Here we are, sir. Darby Donnellan, a tramp-tinker of no fixed abode, but spends most of the winter months in Boynmore, near Croagh Patrick, in County Mayo. Aged about forty. Always to be seen at fairs and race meetings in County Mayo and Galway. Often attends cockfights in the north, and goes to Fairyhouse, Baldoyle and Phoenix Park races. He generally plays the fiddle, and sings songs at those gatherings. Some of his songs are traditional and were handed down from the time of his grandfather who wrote them before he was hanged for sheep-stealing. I seen in an article in the *Western People* what it said about Darby Donnellan that he was 'a ballad-writer of no mean order.' He served various terms of imprisonment for larceny, robbery with violence and assault and battery. Has often raised money in strange towns among simple pious people by posing as a clergyman——"

"A Roman Catholic clergyman, I presume?"

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"A clergyman of various denominations, sir. He posed as a regular and as a circular priest, as a Protestant clergyman and as a Salvation Army sergeant. He was at the Fairyhouse Races on Easter Monday, and reached Dublin a few hours after the rebellion broke out. He took part in the general looting that day in O'Connell Street and stored the things he had stolen in the basement of Liberty Hall after it had been evacuated by the Citizen Army."

"Pardon me a moment, Sergeant Barton. He was found by men of the O.T.C. unit in the cellar of Liberty Hall. He had a girl with him—a youngster of about fifteen."

"That could be now, sir. He takes the girleen, Rosanna is her name, to fairs and race meetings, and she dances while he plays the fiddle. When he gets drunk he beats her with the donkey's reins and with the ass-cart whip. Once he done a fortnight for giving her a savage leathering with his breeches belt when she refused to do an Irish jig at a porter-dance. Is the girleen here? I'd know her at once."

"She is with the female prisoners. What did you say her name was?"

"Rosanna Donnellan."

"Very good. Corporal Thompson, bring in Rosanna Donnellan. That will do for the present, Sergeant Barton. And now we will have the evidence of our bold sergeant of the Royal Irish Rifles, provisionally attached in the rôle of N.C.O. to the Trinity College O.T.C. unit."

The Belfast man deposed that he was a sergeant in the Royal Irish Rifles. He was at home on sick-leave from Salonika, and was provisionally attached to the Trinity College O.T.C. unit. He was in charge of a squad who searched the ruins of Liberty Hall after it

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had been shelled by the *Helga* from Dublin Bay. In the cellar he found Darby Donnellan with a young girl and some others. The girl bit him severely on the hand and kicked him about the body when he tried to assist her in extricating herself from the debris. Donnellan claimed treatment as a prisoner of war, and said that he had been left in charge of Liberty Hall by General James Connolly after the Citizen Army had evacuated it. Asked to explain all the loot collected in the cellars, he said it was the spoils of war which he had commandeered in the name of the Citizen Army. Among the articles were half a dozen fur coats, exclusive of one which the tinker's daughter was wearing. It was a very close day, and she seemed very uncomfortable in the fur coat.

“That will do, Sergeant. But wait just a moment. I suppose this is the young woman that bit you and kicked you?”

“Yes, sir. And sir, in my opinion Donnellan is no common thief or looter. I believe he is a very clever and dangerous Jesuit.”

“A Jesuit? What do you mean?”

“A Fenian Catholic of the worst type.”

The Belfast man's gratuitous comment caused the officer to grin broadly and Sergeant Barton to guffaw volubly.

“Them Carsonites is a bigoted batch of bastards,” whispered Johnny to me in a loud aside.

Rosanna Donnellan, her arms firmly gripped on the right and left respectively by an Australian and a Dublin Fusilier member of our jumble-sale unit, was led or rather hauled into the room in front of the table. There was an expression of sullen defiance on her coarsely handsome features. Her eyes were swollen with weeping, and her wavy black hair, which looked

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like an untrimmed hedge, hung in dank wisps over her forehead. She was dressed in a very expensive fur coat, one flesh-coloured silk stocking and a rose-tinted one, court shoes with very high heels, and the *dernier cri* in a cloche hat, turned back to front. She seemed to have several gold watches dangling from chains round her neck, and on her fingers were about a score of rings at least.

“What’s your name?” asked the officer.

No reply.

“Where did you get that fur coat? And where did you get all these watches and rings?”

Still no reply.

“Look here, my girl,” went on the officer more gently, “you are only a mere child, and if you tell me the truth, I give you my word of honour that nothing will happen to you.”

The girl glanced up suspiciously at the officer. Then suddenly her expression of distrust and defiance merged into one of hope and pathetic appeal. Her lips quivered, and her eyes filled with tears.

“And I won’t be hung. Will I, if I——”

Here she burst into a fit of hysterical weeping, and hid her face with the broad cuff of her fur coat.

“You will be set free if you tell the truth, I promise you,” the officer continued. “We are not here to torture children.”

“Speak up, agrah,” whispered Sergeant Barton. “He’s a good-natured slob of a gosoor. He wouldn’t kill a fly would light on his own nose.”

“That will do, Sergeant Barton. No tampering with witnesses,” snapped the officer. “Come now, my girl. Your name?”

“Rosanna Donnellan, sir,” she sniffed, as she dabbed her eyes and nose alternately with her sleeve.

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"And your age?"

"Fifteen."

"You're very tall for fifteen. Your father's name?"

"Darby Donnellan. 'Twas him, sir, that stole everything. Oh, sir, 'twas him and Ha'porth of Tay and Lonesome Pint and Steal the Hen and Hoke the Spud that done all the looting, and hang them, but don't hang me. Oh, sir——"

"Calm yourself, my child. Your filial solicitude about your father is truly touching. I shall speak to Sergeant Barton about setting you free."

Sergeant Barton, recalled, professed his readiness to sort out the common criminals from the rebels. In view, however, of the dangerous condition of the streets owing to the persistent sniping, he urged that either the prisoners should be kept for the present in the College or should be removed in armoured cars.

And just at that moment as if in support of his plea there came an unusually vicious scattered fusillade punctuated by bursts of machine-gun firing.

"Yes, I think you are right, Sergeant Barton," said the officer. "The College is big enough to house them all. Only one thing you must make sure of. Don't let any of the rebels get out of the net. We are interested in them—not in Darby Donnellan and his type."

"Very good, sir. My two pals will see to that."

(5)

SCENE: The Provost's House, Trinity College, Dublin. The Rev. Sir John Pentland Mahaffy, C.V.O., D.D., D.C.L., G.B.E., Knight Commander of the Order of the Redeemer, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, Hon. Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford,

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Editor of the Petri Papyri, Corresponding Member of the Academies of Vienna, Berlin, and the Lincei (Rome), leaned back in his easy chair and motioned the tinker to a seat opposite him.

"Your escort is coming back for you in two hours' time, Donnellan," said the Provost, twiddling his keys between his pale wrinkled fingers. "I have, of course, explained to them that even if you tried to do so, there is no possibility of your escaping from my house, as the door leading to College Green is securely locked, and furthermore, there is a sentry on guard outside. And now, Donnellan, I shall do my utmost to secure you a—well, let us say, a mitigation of the punishment coming to you. My word carries great weight with both the civil and military authorities. And after all, Donnellan, your offence is a very trivial one compared with the dastardly offence of those young rebels who have stabbed the Empire in the back in her hour of need. The terrible thing about this wretched rebellion is that most of the leaders are graduates of the National University. It only bears out the justice of my contention years ago when the question of establishing a University for Irish Roman Catholics was first mooted, that the Irishry—that is to say the autochthonous natives, the aborigines, to put it more plainly—were as little fitted for higher education as they were for self-government. My learned and distinguished colleagues, Professors Traill, Tyrell and Salmon, also always held the same view. I remember one pithy saying of mine which created much comment. I said it was senseless to establish a University for 'the people who spit in the Liffey'—Ireland's 'hoi polloi,' in other words. But that's all beside the point now. I asked the authorities to permit me to have a private chat with you after I had heard Sergeant Barton state that you were a scion of a family

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of hereditary strolling minstrels. You compose ballads, don't you, and sing them at fairs and races round the country?"

"I do, your reverence," replied the tinker proudly. "And songs with a grand blas too, though it's myself that says it."

"I know, I know," said the Provost with an air of preoccupied petulance. "But there is one thing I want to question you upon particularly. Barton says that some of these songs are traditional, that they have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. He says that there is one song, 'My Name is Darby Donnellan,' which was composed by your great-grandfather. It——"

"Not interrupting your reverence, but Barton is a liar," cut in the tinker impetuously. "It wasn't my great-grandfather wrote that song, but myself. But I let on 'twas my great-grandfather wrote it before he was hung for sheep-stealing forinst the public in Castlebar. It tells all about the trial, and how he was condemned to be hung, and it ends this way:

'Ye tinkers all who stroll the roads, be warned by my sad fate,
Stop stealing geese and hens and turf before it is too late.
And when you see me kick and choke as in the noose
I die,
Pray for the soul of Darby Donnellan, when in the grave
I lie.' "

"Yes, Donnellan, there is rather a dithyrambic note about it, although it is really more in the vein of a Greek threnos. But what I want you to tell me now is this. Can you recite for me any of the songs that were composed by your great-grandfather? Not written by him, mind you, but handed down to his son orally, and

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then on through your father to you? Now can you recollect one of these songs?"

"Well, there was one, your reverence," replied Darby, scratching his head ruminatively. "There was one about a man was hung in the Tithe War—the year of the first Big Wind, for him to pin a tithe-proctor to the bottom of the cart. That song was never written nor put in a printed book—only handed down. No one belonging to me for generations back could read or write—I'm the only scholar of the Donnellan tribe."

"Now, that's interesting, Donnellan—very interesting, because it goes a very long way towards substantiating a theory of mine that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer were preserved and transmitted by guilds or schools of rhapsodists for a considerable time before they were committed to writing. Now, I would indeed like to hear a few verses of the songs that were composed by your great-grandfather and passed on to you via your father without having been committed to writing. Can you just recite one of them?"

"Well, your reverence, my brain is a bit bothered with all the knocking-about I got when the soldiers took my little spoils of war from me, but if I got a taste of something to revive me, mebbe I wouldn't disremember the ways I do now the words of the song."

"Wait a minute, Donnellan. I've got an excellent bottle of pre-war whiskey here, and I have also got a splendid jar of poteen that a clergyman friend of mine sent me down from the west of Ireland a few months ago. He called it 'Connemara Nectar.' I've never opened it. Would you like to sample it?"

"If it's a good poteen I'd a damn sight rather have it than whiskey any day, your reverence, but if it's bad poteen I'd sooner drink tea or cold water itself than touch it."

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"Well, Donnellan this won't hurt you. However, have your choice. Which will it be, now, Donnellan? You're welcome to either poteen or pre-war whiskey."

"I'll chance the poteen, your eminence—your holi—your reverence."

The venerable Provost rose ponderously and unlocking a sideboard produced a bottle and a jar—the latter with its handle and cork cobwebby and dusty.

"Uncork the poteen yourself, Donnellan. Here is the corkscrew. Yes, I'm told that it is remarkably good poteen, but, to be candid with you, I am personally rather shy of these home-brewed beverages. Ha, I see you are an expert at drawing corks. You'll find glasses on the sideboard. Well, sample the poteen, Donnellan, and if you don't like it, go on to the whiskey. I want to jog your memory for that traditional song you have received down through the years orally from your great-grandfather."

Darby held the uncorked jar close to his nose for fully half a minute. Then he smacked his lips appreciatively, and there was a gleam in his eye.

"I know that smell. It's great stuff, your reverence."

He poured out a stiff glass which he drained off at a gulp. Followed a grunt of extreme euexia.

"It has the taste and smell of the stuff they make at the butt of the Reek—Saint Patrick's holy mountain. And if it isn't the real 'Saint Patrick's eye-water' that's in that jar 'tis powerful like it. Where did your friend get it, your reverence?"

"Somewhere outside Westport—Murrisk I think."

"Didn't I know?" shouted the tinker triumphantly. "Taste a drop, your reverence. 'Tis a miraculous drink. I'll take another skeep myself after a bit."

"By all means. Help yourself, Donnellan. But I'm

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far too old to venture on sampling unfamiliar beverages. I was seventy-seven on my last birthday."

"Well, a sup of this will make you shake off ten years as easy as an old ass would shake off his winter coat."

"I've no desire for such artificial rejuvenation. I submit to the laws of God and Nature. I have no Tithonus-like dread of old age and physical dissolution."

"Twill make your toes open and shut, your reverence."

"Such crude physical orgasms don't appeal to me," replied the Provost in chilly tones.

"Twill make you see the grand sights of long ago when Dublin was a great capital city with its own Parliament. You'll see the great patriot, Robert Emmet, and him dying on the gallows for Ireland."

"I have no desire for the sadistic gratification of witnessing the execution of a rebel. My only regret regarding that misguided young felon is that he was an alumnus of this College. It pains me to recall that not only Emmet's rebellion, but that of the Citizen Army, was hatched in Trinity."

"Well, you'll see all the Irish members of parliament in the old House of Parliament across the street that is now the Bank of Ireland, with Grattan at the head of them, singing 'God save Ireland,' and 'Up the Mollies,' and 'Hell roast Carson.'"

"I don't want to witness a revival of the ignominious pageant of the Irish Parliament. The proper place for Irish members of parliament is in the great house in Westminster occupied by an overwhelming majority of members of the predominant partner. The only good thing the old Irish House of Parliament did was to pass its own death sentence."

"Well, your reverence, you'll see Buck Hally and all the other Dublin jackeens driving in their carriages to

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the Hell Fire Club in the Dublin mountains, and you'll see them throwing shovelfuls of golden guineas on the gambling tables of the Sham Squire's Casino near Parliament Bridge, or throwing themselves over the bridge into the river by dint of grief at their losses or by dint of the horrors of drink."

"I loathe gambling, Donnellan."

"Well, you'll see the public hangman boiling the whore alive in a big pot in Stephen's Green."

"Harlots alive and raw never appealed to me, Donnellan, and I don't think that I would appreciate them any better cooked. I'm afraid you're a bit of a sadist, Donnellan. Let us change the subject."

"Well, you'll see Dean Swift walking from St. Patrick's Cathedral with one of his fancy women on each arm, and him on his way to Trinity College to write the *Book of Kells*."

"I'm afraid, Donnellan, that you have both libelled the dead and travestied the facts of history. There is no ground for assuming that the relations of Dean Swift to Esther Johnson, otherwise 'Stella,' and to Hester Vanhomrigh, popularly known as 'Vanessa,' were of the sinister kind that your words suggest, however reprehensible—and, I will say, decidedly callous—his conduct towards these young women may have been. And he certainly never paraded through the streets of Dublin with one of them on either arm."

"Now, do you tell me, your reverence? And isn't Shemus Duffy the born liar to say that he left a wife and a weak little family in England, and that them two women followed him over to Ireland?"

"Who's Shemus Duffy?"

"'Tis the last of the hedge-school masters he is. A great scholar he is, with his head that stuffed with Latin if there was any more in it it would burst. He taught

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Irish to William O'Brien when he lived in Mallow Cottage near Westport."

"Well, Mr. Duffy has exaggerated facts. Dean Swift died a bachelor. It is true, however, that these two misguided young women did follow him over to Ireland. Now—another point, Dean Swift did not write the *Book of Kells*."

"Didn't he now, your reverence?"

"No, the *Book of Kells* is an ancient manuscript copy of the Gospels, beautifully executed with coloured ornamentation, and the most reliable authorities contend that it was written during the sixth or seventh century. It is certainly the most valuable book in Ireland, and one of the greatest and most highly prized treasures of our College. The Pope would give £20,000 if we would sell it to him for the Vatican Library."

"'Tis a lot of money for an ould book, your reverence. And why don't you sell it to him?"

"We treasure it too highly, Donnellan. The book is priceless."

"I'll go bail 'tis a big book it would be, your reverence, to be worth such a power of money. Twenty thousand pounds, begob! Boss Croker didn't give a quarter of that for that fine racehorse, Orby, that won the Grand National five years after the year of the last Big Wind. No, nor for his pedigree bulldog that won all the gold medals thrown in with it."

"One does not assess racehorses and pedigree bulldogs and priceless manuscripts by the same standards, Donnellan. Nor does one assess the value of priceless manuscripts by their bulk, although, incidentally, the *Book of Kells* is a big bulky tome. It is one of the biggest books we have, Donnellan."

"Well—well—and do you tell me, your reverence. 'Tis how I'd like to see it."

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The tinker's eyes roved furtively to the Provost's bookcase.

"Some time later on, Donnellan, I may let you see it. And now before I dismiss you, I want you to write out one of those ballads that have been passed down to you orally by your ancestors. There are writing materials on the table there. And as I'm very tired, I'll just have forty winks while you're writing."

(6)

In response to repeated knocking and ringing at the side door of his establishment, P. J. McGillicuddy, licensed pawnbroker of 999 Marlborough Street, Dublin, poked a timid head over the ledge of his bedroom window. A stout middle-aged man in military uniform was standing at the door beneath.

"Well, what do you want?" came P. J.'s quavering voice.

"Open in the King's name," replied the man in uniform.

"But what—what do you want?" asked the terrified pawnbroker once more.

"Open the bloody door or I'll smash it down," came the truculent reply.

To show that he meant business the soldier hammered with the butt of his rifle against the door.

"All right, I'm coming down," said the pawnbroker in a panic.

A moment later the soldier and the pawnbroker stood in the shop, leaning on the counter. The soldier was carrying a bulky parcel.

"Now, I'm not going to search your shop, though I have a warrant to do so," said the soldier, "but I'm going to pawn with you a little present that I got from an old

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college friend of mine, the Provost of Trinity College. You must not pretend to no one that I pledged it with you, as the Provost would be terrible insulted if he knew that I done it. The book is worth about £20,000, the Provost told me, and I'm only asking a quid on it from you, because I want to redeem it soon. And if I got more I might not be able to pay it back to you. Is it a deal?"

"But how do I know——"

"You must take the word of a soldier of the Connaught Rangers and the word of the Provost of Trinity College."

The pawnbroker scratched his head helplessly.

"Let me see it," he said feebly.

"It wouldn't do you no good. It's wrote above your head in Latin and Greek and Irish. It is over 1200 years old, and there is not another copy of it in existence in the whole world."

"What is it all about?" gasped the pawnbroker apathetically.

"Oh, everything, horse-racing, women, boxing, card-playing and the wars."

"If it's 1200 years old its information about boxing must be very much behind the times," said the pawnbroker with an acidly cynical expression. "I'm afraid I can't——"

"Look here to me," said the soldier truculently. "If I wanted to help myself to your lousy till I could easy do so, and what the hell could you say? And if you don't fork out the quid and a properly made-out ticket I'll flatten your skull against your own counter with the butt of my rifle. I want to redeem this book when the trouble is over and sell it for a lot of money. But the Provost must never know that I pawned it or he'd be horrible hurt for me to pledge his little present with

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a common clown of a dirty pawnbroker like you. And if you open your mouth about it I'll come back and lay you out with the butt of this."

He jabbed the stock of his rifle under the pawnbroker's chin.

"And now, you louse's nit, would you like to know the name of the book?"

"I would that."

"Well, it's the *Book of Kells*."

"The *Book of Kells*!" gasped the pawnbroker.

(7)

"Well, Johnny," said I, "what will it be? A ball of malt—eh?"

Sergeant Barton scratched his fiery head meditatively.

"Bedam, now I don't know but I wouldn't sooner a pint. Kennedy's pulls the best pint in Dublin."

"Well, all the bother of the rebellion is over now, Johnny," I said cheerfully. "You've had a rotten job sorting out the looters from the rebels. Well, here's slainte!"

"Slainte! Begob then I had a stiff job. All sorts of queer complications arose. My dirtiest job was with that rotten blackguard, Darby the Drouth."

"Oh, he escaped, didn't he?"

"He did that—and he robbed right and left after he escaped. Darby the Drouth would steal the Day of Judgment if he knew the date of it. Did you hear the story going the rounds about him stealing the *Book of Kells* out of Trinity College, Dublin?"

"Oh, yes. I heard all about it. They managed to keep it out of the papers, however, for fear of creating a scandal. Tell me the whole story, Johnny."

"Well, it's a long and a dirty story, and so let's have

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another drink before I begin it. Here, John Joe—the same again, and put a better head on it this time. I like a creamy pint. Well, the old Provost, hearing tell that Darby the Drouth used to sing ballads at fairs and race-meetings that had been handed down from father to son by his ancestors, wanted to hear him sing some of them, because he said some old blind poet—I disremember his name now, but I think it was Homer—a blind old ballad-singer, you know, couldn't write or nothing, but just sang the contents of a big book called *Paradise Lost*, and his sons learned it from him, and so on to his grandsons until the art of writing was learned. Did you ever hear tell of *Paradise Lost* now, and you a knowledgeable man?"

"Yes, Johnny. But 'twasn't Homer that wrote *Paradise Lost*. It was Milton. Both poets were blind—so perhaps that is how you got it mixed up."

"It could be, now. But I'm sure it was Homer the Provost said. Well, anyways, as we couldn't shift the looters that night from the College by dint of all the shooting in the streets, and the Provost wanted to have a chat with Darby, we arranged that he should be taken over to the Provost's house under escort. Well, you know—of course there's no need in telling a College-bred man like you, there's two entrances to the Provost's house—one opening into the quadrangle of the College and the other into College Green. 'Twas through the door leading into College Green that Darby escaped. As far as I could make out, the poor old Provost, by dint of his age and him being tired out after the excitement and worry of the rebellion, fell asleep, leaving his keys lying on the table before him. Well, then it seems that Darby stole the keys as well as the Provost's cap and gown and a big book which Darby took away with him, thinking it was the *Book of Kells*.

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It was the biggest book in the Provost's room, all wrote in Greek and Latin and Irish. And then he sneaked quietly to the door opening on the quadrangle, and, after stunning the sentry with a clout with the poker which he picked up from the Provost's fireplace, he gagged him and stripped off his tunic and trousers and rigged himself out in them. He also took the sentry's rifle. Then he let himself out of the Provost's house by the front door leading into College Green, where there was no sentry posted. Well, when the rebellion was over, P. J. McGillicuddy, the pawnbroker, called at our College Green headquarters and handed me the book and told me what Darby done, and how he forced him to take the big book in pledge, and how he told him that it was the *Book of Kells*, and how he said he was coming back after the rebellion to redeem it. Well, we put plain-clothes men watching outside the pawnbroker's for Darby the Drouth, but he didn't turn up at all, only he sent the girleen with the ticket to redeem the book. So our boys pounced on her and she gave up the ticket, but she wouldn't divulge where her father was. 'I don't belong to the breed of the informers,' she says, 'so I won't tell you where he is—not that I wouldn't be glad if 'twas the ways ye hung him when ye catch a hold of him.' 'Well, we won't ask you where he is,' says I, 'but could you tell us what sort of omadhaun came over him to make him steal that book and pawn it? There's something behind that,' says I. 'Well,' says she, 'I don't mind telling you that. He heard tell that the Pope had offered £20,000 for the book, and I heard him tell Hayporth o' Tay and Lonesome Pint that the minute he got the *Book of Kells* out of pawn he'd be off to Rome and offer it to the Pope for £19,000 cash on the nail. Only he wouldn't take no cheque, he said. Not that he'd misdoubt that his Holiness would give him

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a bad cheque at all, but, he says, you couldn't tell but before I'd have time to cash it, Johnny Barton with his splay feet and his hump and his tongue sticking out would come clattering up to the golden throne, and tell the Pope that the *Book of Kells* was stole, and the Holy Father, although he'd swop his three golden crowns for the *Book of Kells*, wouldn't be the receiver of stolen goods, and would stop the cheque before me old da had time to cash it.' So that's the whole story of the why that Darby stole the big book thinking that it was the *Book of Kells*."

"Well, what happened to the tinker's daughter?"

"Oh, we persuaded Rosanna to go to the nuns in Glengariff Street who look after stray youngsters. Well, she didn't stay long with them, but long enough to hand round a couple of black eyes among the other girls, until one day when they were out for a walk by Cabra way, she broke away from her companions. And when they ran after her to take her home and overtook her, didn't she leave her coat and skirt behind in the struggle and away with her to the Dublin mountains, and that was the last was seen of her. Well, we won't bother much about her, but we must get Darby the Drouth."

"Oh, don't worry about him. At any rate he is like the Scarlet Pimpernel—he'll get away from you again even if you catch him. Have another pint. John Joe, the same again."

"Bedam, but I will. It's dry work talking. A nice creamy head like the last one, John Joe. The last pint was grand, but the first was like cold tea. Now it's easy saying don't bother about Darby the Drouth, but didn't you know that he has the Provost's cap and gown?"

"Well, what about that? Can't the Provost buy a new cap and gown?"

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"Ay, but don't you know that Darby by dint of him having the Provost's cap and gown has the power of giving away degrees to any tramp or tinker he likes. And forbye, once he gives letters to a man, nobody can take them away from him. It's like when a priest is ordained. Once a priest, a priest for ever. A bishop can suspend a priest or take his parish from him, but he cannot take away his powers. Well, it's the same with letters to your name. They have got terrible freckened in Trinity about it. They charge six pounds for a degree, and they're afeared they'll have to reduce the price if they don't catch Darby. If he had a bad drought on him 'tis how he'd put all the letters of the alphabet after a man's name for a pint or a G.P. itself. And as it is, B.A.s is as plentiful as blackberries in Ireland."

"Yes," I agreed, "in proportion to the population they are rather numerous."

Sergeant Barton scratched his red head.

"The poor unfortunate country is lousy with B.A.s, I tell you. Every youngster wants to get letters after his name instead of learning a trade. Sure there's lots of B.A.s in the Force itself, and not one of them even a 'G' man itself. And signs on it the trade of the country is gone to blazes, and barring pigs and professional men our exports don't exist."

"Well, Johnny, I like sitting on a high stool in Mooney's, but I must be going now."

"Me too. I must strive my best to catch Darby and get the Provost his cap and gown. *Slan leat, John Joe.*"

"*Slan leat, sergeant,*" replied the barman.

We turned from Eden Quay into O'Connell Street, a bunch of street-bookies vanishing like ghosts at cock-crow as Sergeant Barton's fiery head and big feet came round the corner.

"*Hullo, Sergeant Barton,*" came a mellow voice in

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our rear, while a muscular hand touched my companion on the shoulder.

Barton wheeled round, obviously rather startled, and faced the speaker—a tall, broad-shouldered bronzed man with a pointed naval beard, slightly tinged with grey.

“Oh! begob, Captain Birch agraḥ,” gasped Barton, “you put the heart across me. You made me jump when you——”

“As I’ve seen you make cross-channel crooks jump, Johnny, when you pounced on them as they stepped ashore off my boat. Well, Johnny, I stopped you now to tell you that a mutual friend of ours, Mr. Birrell, the Chief Secretary, left Ireland for good this morning on board the *Helga*.”

“The *Helga*, begob, Captain. That’s the gunboat that smashed Liberty Hall to smithereens about ten days ago. Well, all I can say is that it’s an ease to the poor man to get away from this daft city with all them different armies tramping about and spoiling for rows and bloody wars. You mind me telling you how he thanked me personally for the ways I wore the feet off myself on the day of Mr. Asquith’s war-meeting, hooshing the Citizen Army down one side-street to save them from being masacreed by the Dublin women and that flaming madman Endymion with his bloody sword, and hooshing John MacNeill’s volunteers down another side-street to keep them from being ate up alive by John Redmond’s volunteers. ‘Moidhered I am and bothered in the head with them same private armies, Sergeant Barton,’ he says.”

“Well, he’s gone to his own country now, Johnny, where he won’t see any private armies but the Salvation Army. It’s over seven years ago since he crossed to Dublin for the first time on the *Leinster*. I remember that it was one of the worst crossings in my experience,

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and I told him so. He said that night that he would be the last Chief Secretary for Ireland—that when he gave up his office Ireland would have Home Rule.”

“Home Rule, moryah, Captain. The poor man was milking a buck-goat into a sieve all the time. Well, what about a little sup to drink his health, Captain?”

Captain Birch glanced at his wrist-watch.

“Sorry, Johnny, but I’m due to sail in about an hour’s time. The Irish mail-boat must keep to its time-table. So long, Johnny.”

Less than a year and a half later—just a few weeks before the end of the Great War—Captain Birch went down with the *Leinster*, when she was struck by a torpedo within a few miles of his native Dublin.

And about a year later on Barton was shot dead at the entrance to the Detective Headquarters in College Street.

Note to Reader.—In “The Tinker as Bum-Bailiff,” my next chapter, following the technique known as “narratage” in scenario-writing, I hark back in the first half of the tale to a period some twenty years previous to the Easter Rising of 1916, while the latter part of my story deals with incidents which occurred in 1921 during the struggle between the Crown forces and the I.R.A., better known in Ireland as “the Black-and-Tan times.” In this faithful record of a grim experience of my childhood, which has left an indelible stamp on my memory, Darby Donnellan, the tinker, who is the protagonist of this narrative, does not reappear until the end of the chapter, when he is wanted by the I.R.A. for holding up the Boynmore mail-car.

For the temporary lapse in the next few pages in sustained interest in the adventures of Darby Donnellan and his daughter I crave the reader’s indulgence. This lapse is inevitable, owing to the fact that this book is semi-autobiographical. For many years incidents in my life were dovetailed with those of the tinker and his wife and daughter.

CHAPTER IV

THE TINKER AS BUM-BAILIFF

(1)

"Look at Caillagh Dhu out there at the mouth of the bar, agrah. It isn't often you see it so uncovered. And it wouldn't be left so high and dry now if it were not for that smart land breeze that rose just before the ebb of the spring tide. And now the wind has changed and is coming in nice and soft from the sea."

"Wasn't it on Caillagh Dhu that Liam McGrail was cutting the black wrack when the bailiff caught him, Mr. Duffy?" I asked.

Duffy, the old hedge-schoolmaster, sighed. There was a spell of tense silence, broken only by the pounding of the lines of white rollers on the sandy beach about two hundred yards to the right of the black stretch of jagged, rocky shore that swept, black and menacing, to the ocean's verge, about a quarter of a mile out. And through this desert of jumbled crags, boulders and shelving plateaus of limestone ran like a streak of silver the shrunken channel that zigzagged to the pier of Boynmore. At the mouth of the bar on the right stood out the huge bulk of Caillagh Dhu, surmounted by a red iron cross to warn homing curraghs and hookers of the menace it held when its ugly head was hidden in the ocean. To the right of the channel was islanded a smaller crag, veined with white streaks converging to its apex, on which stood a black iron cross.

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"Yes, 'twas on Caillagh Dhu that poor Liam was cutting black wrack the night that Dan Hoban, Lord Boynmore's bailiff, caught him, agrah," said Shemus. "And, of course, the fact that poor old Liam died in Castlebar jail, where he was serving three months' hard labour for cutting Lord Boynmore's black wrack, will cause bad blood, agrah. You see, Lord Boynmore owns by law the sea-bed for three miles out, and anyone cutting black wrack must pay him so much a load—I forget how much. Well, alannah, Caillagh Dhu has indirectly added another victim to the long list of people shipwrecked on her sinister crags. It's well named, too—'Caillagh Dhu', 'The Black Hag.' It is strange that no boat was ever wrecked on her sister rock the other side of the channel—'Caillagh Bawn,' 'The White Hag.' Did you ever notice that there are always cormorants perched on Caillagh Dhu or diving from its peaks? It's queer how I always think there's a kinship between the cormorant, the *Corvus marinus* or sea-crow, and the harpies of classical mythology; they are both hideous, greedy and obscene, and there is still an old pagan superstition on the western seaboard, dating back to Druidical days, that the cormorant, like the harpy, carries off the souls of living people to the infernal regions."

"Mr. Duffy, I heard Dennis O'Malley, the Citizen, saying at Liam McGrail's wake that Lord Boynmore should be shot, and that the Irish people will have to fight the English on the battlefield, if—"

"Oh, the Citizen would blather about gore," Shemus cut in with acid sarcasm. "But don't listen to his crazy talk, agrah. He was a wild Clan-na-Gael man, full of blood and turf and milla murder blather all the time he was in America. Himself and myself were in the Fenian brotherhood, and we were out in '67. But while

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I became a member of the constitutional movement afterwards, Dennis always believed in physical force. I'm sick of hearing these fellows talking about taking to the hills and scuttling the British Navy with tin pikes. One warship could blow Dublin to smithereens in ten minutes. No, agrah, the constitutional movement is the only——”

(2)

“Constitutional movement, moryah!” came the drawling tones of an American accent in our rear. We both wheeled round abruptly. It was Dennis O’Malley himself, the bitter, intransigent old Fenian, who during his forty years of toil in America had never ceased to nurse his fierce atavistic hatred of England. A forceful, if ultra-florid orator, he had been for many years a familiar figure on platforms on which young exiled Gaels clung passionately to their faith in the physical force movement.

“Constitutional movement—eh?” he repeated, while a rictus of scorn curled his lip. “Teaching the gosoor to follow the parliamentary brass-band—eh?”

Old Shemus turned on him in a flash, his face tense and challenging.

“Yes, I’m teaching him to follow the constitutional movement—to avoid the path that leads to the gallows and the firing squad.”

“You are not paid to teach him politics, Shemus, ma bouchal. What right have you to——”

“What right have you to go telling him and a lot of other youngsters at Liam McGrail’s wake that it’s the right thing to shoot landlords?” said Shemus, in a rising key.

“And so ’tis, Shemus. Landlords are a sort of game

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for which there is no close season. I taught my sons, my exiled sons in America, when they were mere babes, that it was right to pot a landlord at sight."

"A nice way for a father to rear his children," said Shemus acidly. "Do you think for a moment that shooting an odd landlord here and there will put an end to the Irish landlord system? I admit that the system is, as Balfour himself says, 'the very worst landlord system in the world.' Still, isolated assassinations——"

"I agree with you, Shemus, and for that reason I often think that it would be a good thing if there were a special day told off for their wholesale destruction."

"I'm dead sick of your eternal blather about cold-blooded murder, Dennis. For heaven's sake——"

"Cold-blooded murder, Shemus? I looked at the tortured face of a murdered man yesterday, Shemus. Poor old Liam McGrail was murdered. And when I saw that poor man's wasted body brought from Castlebar jail, and when I saw his weeping widow and orphans, all the old Fenian frenzy awoke in me, and I said to the people gathered at the wake that Liam McGrail had been murdered by Lord Boynmore; murdered by a tyrant of alien race, an absentee who never visited the estates that his ancestors had got by confiscation except for a few weeks in summer to kill beasts and fishes; an idler, a profligate, a man Irish in income only——"

"Easy there, Dennis," interrupted Shemus testily. "I don't want to hear about Lord Boynmore's idleness and profligacy. Remember that I'm not an Irish-American public meeting. I just want to tell you that if there's a repetition of crimes like the assassination of Lord Leitrim and his agent——"

"Assassination! Assassination! What about the assassination of poor Liam McGrail, who was killed, killed through ill-treatment in jail? And all for what? Because

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he went out to Caillagh Dhu in the dead of night to cut black wrack to manure the barren bog-land for which he had to pay rack-rent to Lord Boynmore."

"Well, Dennis, the law is the law, and must be obeyed. The black wrack that grows on the rocks is the landlord's and has got to be paid for, while the loose weed that drifts in with the tide, the flotsam and jetsam weed the lawyers call it, is free. That's the law, ma bouchal."

"And what right has the landlord to demand payment for the black wrack that grows on Caillagh Dhu? That rock is always under the water except at the extreme ebb of a spring tide. So I do not see any justice in the landlord's claim to own what's usually covered by the sea. And what's more, the drift-weed is not nearly so nourishing for the land as the black wrack is. And, to make matters worse, there have been so few storms during the past few months that there's hardly any drift-weed coming in. It's a terrible thing to see the poor devils, as you and I have seen them, Shemus, up to their necks at midnight in the wintry tide, striving to catch the floating weed in landing-nets before it is carried out to sea again."

"I know the poor tenants are brutally treated, Dennis, but the constitutional movement will end all that. That movement will, sooner perhaps than some of us even dare to hope, usher in the dawn of a new Ireland."

"The dawn of a new Ireland?" echoed Dennis with biting sarcasm. "The dawn of a new Ireland, moryah!"

"Dennis, why are you so bitter?" said old Shemus with a sigh. "Can't you give the constitutional movement a chance?"

"Give it a chance, is it? It has got many a chance. There's nothing but physical force that will put the fear of God into England. Didn't Gladstone himself say in

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the House of Commons that the blowing-up of Clerkenwell Prison by the Fenians paved the way for him for the disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland? There's the Grand Old Man himself owning up to it that terrorist tactics are the best to adopt against his country. And you and I have seen a hundred members of the R.I.C., armed with rifles and fixed bayonets and reinforced by a company of redcoats, marching in the rear of Lord Boynmore's bailiffs and battering-rams to demolish a few cabins in the village of Tholabawn. And why this grand panoply? Because 'Bloody Balfour's' teeth were chattering with terror in Dublin Castle when he heard that Lord Boynmore's bailiff had got a prod with a pitchfork one night in the seat of the pants."

"Oh, the Chief Secretary, 'Bloody Balfour' as you call him, isn't so bad as he is painted," deprecated Shemus, "and you could get worse landlords than Lord Boynmore, Dennis."

"You could get worse landlords than Lord Boynmore! Well, if that isn't damning with faint praise! Look here, Shemus, it's very hard to realise that you were once the sturdy young rebel who tramped the country from dawn till dusk in rain and storm with me to raise a fund to erect a monument to the horse that broke Lord Boynmore's grandfather's neck when he was fox-hunting. Do you know, Shemus, I could cry my fill when I see how the friend of my young days has——"

"Oh, Dennis, avic, young lads are not old men," interrupted Shemus, shaking his head while he shuffled his feet, and looked seaward with the air of a man ill at ease. "It wasn't a very Christian impulse that actuated us, but, at any rate, Croagh Patrick—well I remember him after all these years—was a magnificent horse, and he won the Connemara Plate at the Galway Races for

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three years running before he was put into the hunting-field. And I often used to think what a shame it was to have a beautiful, grand-actioned horse like that galloping round the country with an old ruffian like Lord Boynmore's grandfather on his back. And you must admit that the grandson is a great improvement on——”

“What about poor Liam McGrail?” cut in Dennis sharply, “lying cold in his grave because he cut black wrack on that dirty lump of a rock in front of us.”

“‘Twas Massey, the agent, that did that. Lord Boynmore knew nothing about it.”

“Nonsense, Shemus! Nonsense!” barked Dennis. “Although Lord Boynmore is an absentee, he knows every move his agent makes. And he is always worrying old Massey for money, because, although his rent-roll is £20,000 a year, his chorus-girl wife from the slums of Whitechapel is spending it all at Monte Carlo. Oh, it's the usual old game—blaming the agent. And now that reminds me of something. Do you remember the telegram Lord Boynmore sent from London to his agent a couple of years ago, the time that Father Tom was pressing him to reduce the rent for the tenants on account of the very bad harvest? And to ginger up old Massey a telegram from the boys was sent to him threatening to shoot him if he didn't reduce the rents.”

“Oh, that was just a yarn, Dennis, made up by some lad of the village.”

“It was no yarn. Take it from me, Shemus. That threatening letter put the fear of God into old Massey's heart. The lesson of what happened Lord Leitrim and his agent wasn't lost on him. He wrote to Lord Boynmore, begging him to reduce the rents. I saw the letter myself.”

“How did you see the letter? What do you mean, Dennis?”

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"Well, you know yourself that the postmistress is the most industrious woman in Boynmore. How she gets time to steam and open all the letters that go in and out of that office—well, it beats me. A marvellous woman. I take off my hat to her. Well, she steamed that letter over a kettle. The last words of it were: 'For God's sake, reduce the rents for this year, or they will shoot me as they have threatened. I have a presentiment of it.' Very well, two days later I was in the post-office when a wire came through from Lord Boynmore. This is how it ran: 'Massey, Kildangan Lodge, Boynmore, Mayo—My tenants need not think that they can intimidate me by threatening to shoot you.—Boynmore, Carlton Club.'"

(3)

Old Shemus and myself were among the crowd that thronged Boynmore Pier and looked anxiously out on the raging waters. All the fisher-folk of Boynmore had gone out to the ocean early that morning on the trail of a huge shoal of herrings. There were fitful gusts off and on before the last of the craft had faded away on the verge of the horizon. Then dense black clouds welled up from the west, and about two hours later a terrific thunderstorm, accompanied by torrential rain, burst. After about an hour the rain ceased, but the gale still raged with unabated fury.

Hours passed, with the eyes of the watchers strained across the tumbling waste of waves, but in vain.

"Well, what do you think of it, Pat?" ventured Shemus in a whisper to an aged fisherman beside him.

The old man glanced furtively at the sobbing women, then, cupping his mouth with his hands, he bent to Shemus's ear.

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"The hookers will get home safe, with God's help, Mr. Duffy, but the curraghs will have a hard fight of it. I'm afeared some of them will be swamped, or, maybe, swept out to the Atlantic itself. And I've seen many's the curragh in my day swept on to its death on Caillagh Dhu, and them practically at the gates of safety. Them curraghs has no grip on the waves, and the wind to get them broadside, 'tis how 'twould sweep them like chaff or thistledown before it."

"Michael McGrail, the widow's son, is gone out in a curragh, isn't he, Pat?"

"He is, in troth, Mr. Duffy. Sure, didn't Dan Hoban, Lord Boynmore's bailiff—may the divil break the hasp of his neck—seize poor Michael's hooker for the rent last week, and so he has gone shares with another man in a curragh. I hope he comes safe past Caillagh Dhu, and that she won't be the death of him, as she was of his father—the Lord have mercy on him! Look out west, Mr. Duffy. Them's the boats coming."

Specks dotted the horizon's edge. Slowly, very slowly, they increased in size, and after a bit we clearly saw sails aslant against the grey waste. Nearer the hookers came, their squat hulls heeling to the blast, their sails pitching fitfully at perilous angles. Occasionally a sail almost lay flat on the waves, while a cry of horror arose among the huddled group on the pier. And then amid a tornado of cheers it would right itself again.

"Where are the curraghs? I don't see a sight of them," rang out a woman's despairing wail. It was Mrs. McGrail, who had broken away from the knot of weeping women. She was wringing her hands in anguish.

"My poor man not a year dead, and all due to Lord Boynmore and his cruelty, and here now it's my son's turn. May God forgive them that tormented the poor

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boy and his father! If only he had his fine strong boat——”

“Cheer up, Mrs. McGrail, cheer up,” called out old Shemus. “I see the curraghs. They are a bit behind the hookers.”

Straining our eyes, we saw in the wake of the hookers six curraghs dancing and bobbing shoreward. Nearer and nearer they came, and presently we could hear the short, sharp impact of the oars against the thole-pins, while the long thin oar-blades now shot into the air in unison, now dipped in unison. Sometimes the high, blunt snout of a curragh disappeared in the trough of a wave—sometimes they all vanished, while a groan of anguish arose from the watchers on the shore. Then amid a wild cheer the six prows would leap to the crest of an in-rolling comber, only to vanish a few seconds later in a yawning chasm of water.

The hookers lowered their mainsails, and, on fore-sail and jib, negotiated the narrow passage between the red and black crosses that warned homing craft of the hidden fangs of Caillagh Dhu and Caillagh Bawn. Every now and then the topmost peak of Caillagh Dhu emerged in the trough of the waves, while in its rear the water seethed and boiled among the vast expanse of rocky sea bed that stretched away northwards towards the sandy beach.

The cheering which greeted the safe anchorage of the hookers died away, and the watchers held their breath as the curraghs breasted the line of rollers at the harbour bar. Three of the frail craft got safely between the iron crosses, when a sudden squall from the south struck the other three broadside. It may have been that my nerves were so morbidly keyed up with the sense of imminent disaster that a feeling of nauseating horror overwhelmed me when I saw three cormorants alight

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on the southern peak of Caillagh Dhu, and thought of old Shemus's idea about their affinity with the harpies. Were the hideous birds waiting to pounce on the fishermen's souls?

Gripped by the squall, the little canvas, keelless contraptions skidded amid the smoke of flying spindrift along the crest of a gigantic roller, and were swept into the boiling cauldron that seethed among the rocks north of Caillagh Dhu. A needle-like snag on the northern hump of Caillagh Dhu ripped the foremost curragh from stem to stern. The rending sound was merged in a cry of horror from the pier, which swelled to an agonising crescendo as the starboard oars of the boat following in the wake of the wreckage snapped like matches against the same fang-like tooth of Caillagh Dhu. An oncoming comber curled up the little cockle-shell in its spume-capped green crescent, and sweeping on with a deafening roar, actually beached it with a grating bump on the shingle. Only for a moment, however. Followed the boiling backwash of the receding roller, sucking the curragh and hundreds of tons of boulders and shingle with a hollow, rumbling growl away out to crash into the next oncoming concave mountain of green water. Shorewards the curragh was swept again, turning topsy-turvy in the coil of the comber.

Shrieks of agony from the boiling water rang antiphonic changes with the cries of horror and the wailing on the pier. The struggling of the drowning men was brief, however. With the fatalism of western fisherfolk, none of them had ever learned to swim. "If you are to drown, you are to drown," is their stoic creed. Not that even the strongest swimmer would have the faintest chance in that seething cauldron. Most of the poor fellows must have died, not by drowning, but by mutilation, on the jagged rocks.

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A score of fishermen hurriedly snatched up ropes and rushed towards the spot where the curragh had been beached, only to be swept away again. Shemus and I followed in their wake. There was a vague muddle-headed idea about rigging out some sort of a life-line. When we reached the foreshore, however, and saw the undertow of the receding combers wrenching with ominous rumblings boulders and shingle away out to sea, it was clear that any effort at rescue would be futile.

No sign of anybody anywhere battling in that boiling expanse. Nothing but the treacherous, jagged rocks, bobbing up ever and anon amid the intermittent wallow of the waves.

For a long time I remained transfixed, looking with tear-dimmed eyes, unseeingly, over the tumbling waters, while the babel of lamentation rang in my ears. Then suddenly my gaze was riveted in horror on patches of crimson that streaked the foam-topped crest of a wave. With a shudder of nausea I looked away towards Caillagh Dhu. Wedged in a cleft on its topmost peak, now left bare by the fast-ebbing spring tide, I saw the blade of an oar. And amid the slimy black wrack that garbed the sinister rock shreds of tattered canvas attached to fragments of lath fluttered in the gale.

And, even as I looked, three ungainly cormorants scrambled and scuttled with strident squawkings along the slope of Caillagh Dhu.

(4)

Never shall I forget the depression that weighed on me as I took my first stroll through Boynmore after an absence of nigh a quarter of a century. I recognised nobody. Nobody recognised me. And yet twenty-five

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years ago I knew every man, woman and child within a ten-mile radius.

But not only did it seem that strangers had supplanted the kindly neighbours I knew long ago; the very appearance of the little town was fantastically metamorphosed. Exotic rococo excrescences that stood out like malignant boils along the main street glared hideously on the view. The violent polychromes of a brand-new garage and a brand-new kinema, yclept the "Alhambra," assailed my eye. A corrugated iron shanty, without any sense of humour, called itself a "Palais de Danse." Pasted askew on its rat-chewed door, a crude poster announced that "Bert Muldoon and his Aeolian melody wizards from Dublin" were to play there some time in the paulo-post-future for the "Hockey Club Dance." Gaunt, smoke-grimed skeletons were all that remained of the R.I.C. barracks and the coastguard station.

In the fly-blown window of a drapery shop, grandiloquently styled "The Western Clothiers' Hall," which had a subtle suggestion of impending insolvency, a poster, held in position by shreds of stamp-paper, announced: "Mr. P. J. Mulrooney, the proprietor of the Western Clothiers' Hall, has returned with many chic creations from London and Paris, where he has been following the trend of fashion."

Filling the entire doorway of the shop, a fat, unkempt, ill-shaven man in shirt-sleeves loafed against the lintel, smoking his pipe, and spat thoughtfully into the dusty street. Obviously P. J. resting after his trend.

Seeing the town-hall open, I walked listlessly in. It was empty. There was a touch of macabre irony in the juxtaposition on its blistered and cobwebbed-draped wall just facing the door of an adjuration in green hand-painted characters to "Join the I.R.A.," and the tattered

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shreds of a mildewed, faded poster with its belated appeal, "Join an Irish Brigade to-day, and avenge Belgium."

"Hands up!"

In deference to the peremptory summons I wheeled round, while my hands shot up like semaphores. I found myself facing four young men in trench coats and caps who eyed me with bleak suspicion. Then one of them stepped towards me and asked me what my name was. I gave it, adding that I was a native of Boynmore. He fixed me with a gaze of cynical distrust, and expressed regret that he would have to search me in the name of the I.R.A.

Distasteful as the ordeal was, there was nothing for it but to submit to the will of this grim young man. He looked through my diary and skimmed over a couple of letters. Then, all of a sudden, the tenseness faded from his face and he gave a tentative smile.

"Now I wonder would you be—yes, begorrah—you wouldn't be a son of the old doctor that's dead—the Lord have mercy on his soul!"

"Yes, I'm his son."

He extended his hand cordially.

"Well, now—well, now—but I'm glad to see you here in your own native village. Of course, I don't expect that you'd remember me. I was only a gossoon of five when you left Boynmore. My name is McGrail—a son of the widow McGrail. You may remember that my brother was drowned—his curragh was wrecked on Caillagh Dhu."

"I remember—I remember quite well. I was only a child myself then, but while I live I shall never forget that terrible day. And I remember your poor father too. He died in Castlebar jail, where he had been imprisoned for cutting black wrack on Caillagh Dhu."

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His lips compressed, his jaw set, a smouldering fire in his half-lidded eyes, the young man looked at me for a moment in silence.

"I was so small at the time that the whole thing is like a terrible vague nightmare to me," he said at length in husky, broken tones. "I just remember my mother crying bitterly, and I remember seeing the Citizen and a crowd seizing Dan Hoban, the bailiff, and throwing him into a limekiln. I suppose you know Hoban was blind after his baptism of quicklime. They also threw Darby the Drouth, the tramp-tinker, Hoban's bum-bailiff, into the kiln. His face was badly scarred by the quicklime, but he came off better than Dan Hoban."

"Yes, I remember. And the Citizen joined Colonel Lynch's Irish Brigade and was killed in South Africa. A week before his death, I believe, President Kruger himself presented him with the Transvaal Cross."

"That's right—that's right," he said absent-mindedly, and lapsed into a moody silence which seemed interminable. Then all of a sudden he became very alert and gripped my shoulder with a trembling hand.

"Come this way," he said in an undertone. He led me to a window in the rear of the hall which commanded a view of Boynmore harbour and a wide sweep of countryside.

"I suppose you'd hardly recognise the landscape," he said grimly. "We've altered the map a bit."

"My God!" I gasped.

The blackened walls of Boynmore Castle stood out grim and forbidding against the barren hillside. When I had last seen it its bold Norman towers nestled against a background of acres of oak and sycamore.

"What a desolate sight!" I exclaimed. "The gutted castle is drear enough—but the woods—what happened to the woods?"

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“Oh, we didn’t touch the timber. Lord Boynmore had cut it all down and sold it during the Great War. But we burned the castle as a reprisal. ’Twas this way. We got definite proof that Massey, Lord Boynmore’s agent, had been spying on the I.R.A. He gave information which sent two of our boys to the gallows. We executed him yesterday morning. The court-martial was held in Kildangan House, and just as he was being led out to face the firing squad, he said that it was at Lord Boynmore’s instigation he spied on us. However, we can’t get at Lord Boynmore, as he hasn’t turned up this summer for his ‘annual slaughter of beasts and fishes,’ as the Citizen used to say. And at any rate he is bound to die a violent death, as his father and grandfather and great-grandfather did. You’ve often heard the old people talking, of course, about the curse the old widow that was evicted put on his great-grandfather, the second Lord Boynmore. Funny how the curse worked out so far. Lord Boynmore’s great-grandfather was shot in a gambling den on the Riviera, his grandfather broke his neck in the hunting field—you remember hearing about the monument they erected to the horse that threw him—and then his father was drowned on a pleasure cruise. Now, do you think it was all only chance, and that the curse won’t follow him?”

I made no reply. My gaze was fixed on the forbidding ridge of Caillagh Dhu with its cloak of black wrack silhouetted against the sky-line. Borne on the sea breeze came the raucous scream of three ugly cormorants perched on its topmost crag.

“I suppose,” he went on, a little petulantly, “you coming from the great world look upon all this talk about curses as mere ignorant superstition?”

“Oh, not at all,” I deprecated. “I believe that retribution follows in the train of wickedness. It’s a tenet

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common to both Christianity and paganism, but—but I find it hard to believe that God allows man to preordain the fate of his fellow-man. And talking about the tragic deaths of Lord Boynmore's forebears—after all, it may be just coincidence."

"Coincidence! Coincidence!" he snapped testily. "Well, I wonder will you call it a coincidence that a curse has fallen on all those that persecuted and caused the death of my father and brother. Dan Hoban, the bailiff, going around a blind beggar to-day, and Darby the Drowth, the tinker, with the marks of his quicklime baptism branded for ever on his ugly gib—a horrible warning to all skunks of his kind. Lord Boynmore's castle burned to the ground. Massey's house burned also, and himself plugged with lead, lying in a bog-hole. And wait a minute—here's a queer thing. Did you ever hear the old superstition about cormorants carrying off the souls of people to hell?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Of course, I know it's only a pagan superstition, dating back to the Druidical days, and—and, of course, I don't believe it. I don't. As a Catholic I cannot believe it. But I do believe that the cormorant is a bird of ill-omen. And now, tell me, did you ever hear of a cormorant building its nest on a tree?"

"I think I have read that it does so occasionally."

"Well, I never heard of it, nor did anyone else round here. But to come to my story. At the moment of the execution of Massey yesterday morning a cormorant rose high up into the air from the trees behind the house, and darted with a hoarse scream to the foot of Caillagh Dhu, and plunged into the sea.

"It was frightened by the shots of the firing squad, I suppose," I suggested.

"Maybe, maybe. Well, some of the boys searched

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Massey's garden afterwards and found the cormorant's nest. The nest was made of black wrack. And we watched the nest from a distance to see if the cormorant would return to it. It hasn't. You may say the shots scared it away, but the cormorants round here are used to the sound of shots. Now, tell me, is this a coincidence? The deserted nest is still there—a nest of black wrack."

I evaded answering his question, as it was on an issue about which he held a definite opinion, while I had never given a thought to it. I thought it advisable to change the topic.

"What will be the upshot, do you think, of this fight between you and the British Government?"

"Oh, we have practically won," he replied enthusiastically. "England could easily crush us by brute force for the time being—but she realises that the result would inevitably be that all Ireland would have to be a perpetually armed camp. Furthermore, the English public are ashamed of the conduct of the Black-and-Tans. Our trouble now is with our own riff-raff. There are slum-birds in Dublin and village thugs here who are looting wholesale, taking advantage of the general turmoil. We are hot on the track now of one of that gang, Darby Donnellan, the strolling tinker, better known as Darby the Drouth—the same blackguard who was chucked into the limekiln with Dan Hoban, the bailiff, over a score of years back. He took part in the recent holding up of the Boynmore mail-car. We are collecting evidence against him, and I am hoping that we will lay him by the heels in a couple of days at the latest. He was the laddo that brought a lot of loot down to Liberty Hall in Dublin after it had been evacuated by the Citizen Army. When the *Helga* shelled Liberty Hall he was arrested by the British and taken to Trinity College, which was the headquarters of the

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Irish Command. He escaped from custody, taking with him, among other things, the *Book of Kells*."

"I suppose you will be thinking of rearresting me," I said with a smile, "when I tell you that I was one of the soldiers who dug Darby and his daughter out of the ruins of Liberty Hall. I was fighting against the rebels in Easter Week, 1916. It was by accident, I must say, that I was let in for that nasty job. I joined to fight the Germans—not my own countrymen."

Commandant McGrail smiled, and gripped my hand warmly.

"There are lots of men in the I.R.A. now who fought like yourself in the Great War. They were fooled, as John Redmond was fooled, by British politicians."

CHAPTER V

THE TINKER AND THE BLACK PIG

MRS. DONNELLAN, my old nurse, did not recognise me when I called on her the day following my return to Boynmore after an absence of nearly a quarter of a century. On the other hand, I was able to trace, with an effort, of course, the features of the very comely woman of thirty of my childhood's memories, in the furrowed cheeks and sunken eyes of the prematurely ageing creature of fifty-five, who sighed deeply as she gazed at the glowing embers of the turf fire.

"You haven't changed very much, Bridget," I ventured with thoughtful and chivalrous mendacity.

"Musha, asthore, machree, I have changed, and changed terrible—in body and in spirits," she said mournfully. "And small wonder with all the trouble I went through. 'Twas a very foolish woman I was to marry a tinker, and, more be token, a shocking drouth of a tinker, the likes of Darby Donnellan. Three children I had for him, and the sorra bit he ever done to provide for them, only spending every penny on porter. Yes, agrah, machree, a rotten drouth he is, and lately he has the shakes so bad by dint of all the porter he drinks that he's no good at his trade, only spoiling tin and cracking people's heads with his soldering-iron when he is lit up with liquor. And the I.R.A. is after him now for him to have robbed a mail-car in the name of the Irish Republic, him letting on he was a Volunteer, moryah! The only money he makes at all now, barring

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what he gets from stealing anything—from hens, and turf, and asses, to postal orders—is by singing ballads and selling them for a penny a sheet at the fairs and patterns and races, and by playing the fiddle at porter dances."

"Oh! I believe I saw him singing outside a public-house as I was passing through the square of Boynmore, Bridget. Well, he has changed terribly during the last five years. The last time I saw him was during the Easter Week Rebellion. I wonder, all the same, if it was really Darby whom I saw to-day. When I saw the livid scars on his face, I thought it was Darby. He had a stubbly beard of about a week's growth; a tall, dark, lean—"

"Dirty-looking, red-nosed, ragged blackguard—that's him, agrah," cut in Mrs. Donnellan, completing the word-picture of her mate with deft, swift touches. "He's much younger than me; I was twenty-eight when we got married. Remember, agrah, he is my second husband. He was only a gosoor of nineteen, and me twenty-eight, when we got married. My eldest daughter, Mary Bridget, made a grand match—she's a Dublin Metropolitan constable's lady in Dublin. But there's no use in me bothering you with all this talk and you moidered and bothered with travelling over the seas. And now, 'tis few people you would remember in the town of Boynmore, agrah, and you coming back after all those years, I suppose."

"Well, Bridget, I didn't meet a soul. Why, I was arrested by an officer of the I.R.A. yesterday on suspicion of being an English spy. The man who arrested me is a native of Boynmore like myself, but some five years younger. His name is McGrail—a son of the Widow McGrail. Oh! by the way, for some years I kept up a correspondence off and on with my old

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teacher, Shemus Duffy, but for several years he has not answered my letters. Is he still living?"

"Well, the poor man is as good as dead," replied Mrs. Donnellan with a sigh. "'Tis a good while now since he went simple and dark. You might see him any day and him tap-tapping with his stick, and him led along the roads by a knowledgeable little terrier, and him talking sometimes to himself and sometimes to anyone who would be bothered listening to his blather. He thinks he is still living in the days of the Land League, and that John Redmond is still at the head of the Irish Party, and sometimes he thinks it's Parnell is in power again, and then you'd hear him shouting at the terrier, 'Trust Asquith!' and 'Don't embarrass the Liberals!' I don't know what he means by them queer sayings. Sure, myself didn't I meet him one day, poor man, walking along the mountainside there, and he said he was walking to Mallow Cottage, in Westport, to coax William O'Brien to make the 'Mollies' and the 'All-for-Irishers' shake hands. And when I was de-ludhering him that I would walk with him to Westport, and me all the time bringing him back by another road to his own house, he said that the Sinn Feiners got the upper hand of John Redmond by dint of the District Inspector that put his sword through the drum of a United Irish League band that was playing 'High upon the Gallows-tree.' And another queer notion that poor old Shemus has is that your father (God rest his soul!) is still alive, and is going his rounds attending to the sick people. Ay, agrah, poor old Shemus is getting more simple every day, and all by dint of his head being too full of brains."

"As I walked through Boynmore, Bridget, I noticed that the very names over all the shops were different. The only familiar name was Jimmy McGloin's. He was

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a member of the Board of Guardians and a justice of——”

“Poor old Jimmy is gone a bit queer too, agrah,” cut in my old nurse. “It broke his heart when his letters were took from him. He was that proud of them letters that you’d see painted on his carts that goes to the railway station for goods: J. P. McGloin, J.P., P.L.G.”¹

“Dennis O’Malley, the old Fenian—the Citizen, we used to call him—was a great friend of old Shemus. He is a long time dead, I hear.”

“Tis years and years he’s dead, agrah. He was killed fighting for Kruger against the English. ‘Tis queer, agrah, what a change twenty-five years will bring. People living still on the old spot see the boys and girls growing up around them and taking their places as the old people slip quietly into the grave.”

“Yes, Bridget, and that’s why I felt that I was walking through a graveyard as I passed through Boynmore. I didn’t recognise a soul. Oh! yes I did—just one—your daughter.”

“My Rosanna—is it? My little Rosheen Dhu? Sure she was only born a few months before you left Boynmore.”

“Yes, but I saw her several times since then both in Achill and in Dublin. You see, I have been down in Mayo a few times in the course of the past few years, but after my father died and my mother and my brothers and sisters had gone to America I could not bear to return to Boynmore. But Rosanna has grown tremendously during the past five years. And yet I recognised her. And Bridget, I recognised her because she is the exact image in every way of what you were when I last saw you. And a very beautiful girl I must say she is.”

A faint smile played on the furrowed face.

¹ Poor Law Guardian.

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“They say my Rosheen is the dead spit of me, asthore. But isn’t you has the great brains to remember what I was like so many long years ago? And asthore, machree, barring something like your face and your voice when you laugh, I disremember even what you were like.”

She rose with a sigh, and taking a piece of bog-deal from the recess under the hob alongside her, placed it on the fire. As the flames leaped up, they lit up a face that was suddenly suffused with a queer, impish expression of mirth.

“You can think so far back, agrah,” she said with a merry twinkle in her eye, as she resumed her seat, “that I wouldn’t put it past you to remember the day I saved you from being ate up alive by the black pig.”

“The black pig, is it, Bridget?” I became suddenly all agog with amused curiosity about this adventure of my babyhood, about which my aunts and mother had often given me such scrappy fantastic variants. “Is it really true that you saved me from being eaten by a pig?”

“It is the truth, allannah, machree,” she said, bursting into such a hearty fit of laughter that the tears came into her eyes. “All the same it was no joke at the time, I tell you,” she went on, mopping her tears with the end of her apron, and lapsing again into the gentle lethargy temperamental to her. “I mind the day well. It was a lovely August morning, and I had wrapped you nicely in your perambulator and wheeled you into the garden, when the missis called me into the house to tell me to take in all the washing that was spread out on the whins, whether it was dry or not. She was afeared it would be stole, because a big crowd of tinkers from Galway and Clifden had camped in Parc Mor—a big field that was convenient—and what’s more, the North Mayo Militia

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was doing a route from Castlebar that same day to Rossmore, and was to camp for a week in Carramore, and she was more afeared of the militiamen even than the tinkers stealing the clothes——”

“Militiamen stealing clothes?”

“Steal clothes is it, agrah? The militiamen would steal the coppers off a dead man’s eyes. They wouldn’t leave a hen in the parish if so be you don’t lock them up and them passing. Well, anyways, I heard you crying terrible loud, and I ran into the garden to see what was up. And if I didn’t see the perambulator upset, and you lying on the grass and a black pig had half the clothes tore off you, and he had bitten your arm, and you were all covered with blood! The Lord save us! Well, there was a big stick of sloc na mara handy, and ’twas a hard fight I had to beat off that same pig! I drove him through the garden gate and out into the yard. And didn’t I give Pat Moran the length of my tongue for him to have left the gate open? By the same token, agrah, the garden is now a pasture field. They call it *Gort-na-muc-dhu*—‘the field of the black pig.’”

“Yes, I remember Pat very well. He was your first husband, Bridget.”

“He was, God rest his soull! And a decent man, and your mother always found him an honest and industrious workman. But where was I at all, at all? Oh yes! All the old people said that it was not lucky nor right to let a pig live that had tried to ate a Christian. Your father, who was a very knowledgeable man, of course, him being a doctor, laughed and said it was all pish-rogues, but all the same he gave into the old people. But the queer thing was, acushla, that while they were argufying as to the ways the pig should be killed, whether he should be shot or get his throat slit by the butcher, if the pig didn’t die that very same night in

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a fit of the dancing staggers! Well, they buried the old pig, and if the tinkers that were camped in Parc Mor didn't dig him up again, and cut him up and divide him among themselves! Darby Donnellan, the black-guard I'm married to, was among the tinkers that dug him up, and him only a gosoor of ten at the time. 'Twasn't many days after when some queer disease broke out, and flattened the whole field of tinkers, and some of them died. You mind me mentioning the militiamen? Well, they stole one of the hindquarters of the pig from the tinkers, and the next thing was all the militiamen in Carramore were on the flat of their backs too, raving mad with fever, and letting terrible curses against the tinkers. Soon the fever spread all over the parish, and——"

"Excuse me just a minute, Bridget," I interrupted, "wasn't the fever really caused by the people eating diseased potatoes? It was the year of the great blight."

"'Tis true, alannah, there was a terrible blight on the potatoes that same harvest, but 'twas queer that the sickness started among the tinkers who stole and ate part of the dead pig, and spread to the militiamen, who also ate a good share of the pig, and from them it spread to the people. Well, your father (God rest his soul!) was killed out with attending night and day to the sick, and there was a good lot died too, and he said that the fever was caused, maybe, by the bad potatoes, but all the old people, and my mother too, who was a very knowledgeable woman, and used to read fortunes at fairs and races, said that the fever was caused by dint of the tinkers and the militiamen having ate a pig that had died after him having bit the doctor's gosoor."

"And do you still believe, Bridget, that it was the eating of the dead pig that caused this terrible disease?"

"Of course I do, agrah."

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“Then I fear that a very heavy responsibility weighs on me. Did it ever occur to anybody that possibly I poisoned the pig that sickened the whole countryside?”

“Some of the tinkers and militiamen did say the same, but nobody heeded their ignorant blather. But there was a good deal of argufying, and a meeting was called at the Town Hall, and the P.P.,¹ and the M.P., and the R.M., and the D.I.² and the P.L.G.s³ were at it, and the doctor made a speech at the meeting, and he said that whatever caused the fever, the people would have to get relief from the Government to help them to buy nourishing food instead of the diseased potatoes that were growing black in the shucks. Well, the long and the short of it was that Mr. Balfour, the Chief Secretary, him that they used to call ‘Bloody Balfour,’ came down all the ways from Dublin Castle to enquire into the cause of the fever.”

“Is it a fact, Bridget, that the Chief Secretary himself went into some of the potato fields and actually dug up potatoes in different places in order to see the state of things for himself?”

“He did, indeed, asthore. I can see him before my eyes this blessed minute, a long lean lath of a man, with a black moustache. And don’t you believe the stories going around that Mr. Balfour had a cloven foot like the devil! ’Twas the Citizen (God rest his soul!)—that spread them lies. Now, I seen Mr. Balfour’s boots with my two eyes when he was digging potatoes. They were good townsman’s boots with spring-sides. Well, anyways, Mr. Balfour said that the potatoes was unfit for inhuman combustion, and away with him to Dublin, and when he got there he leaped into a ship at once and sailed over the seas to Queen Victoria, and he

¹ Parish Priest.

² District Inspector.

³ Poor Law Guardian.

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told her flat that he wouldn't leave the palace till she gave him enough money to start relief works around Boynmore. Now, the Queen wasn't a gripe, and there are some ways she was very flohool,¹ but she was a careful woman, and forbye she had a long family to provide for. So she argued about the point for a long time, but at last she gave him enough money to build a light railway from Boynmore to Kildangan Sound and a fish-curing station and a new pier, and a lot of steam-rolled roads."

"What did Mr. Balfour think was the real cause of the fever, Bridget?"

"Well, agrah, he owned up to Queen Victoria, the same as he owned up to the doctor, and the M.P., and the R.M., and the P.P., and the D.I. and P.L.G.s that his brains was bothered trying to find out whether the fever was caused by the blighted potatoes or by dint of the tinkers and the militiamen having ate a pig that died of the dancing staggers after biting a Christian."

"I want to have a look at the light railway to Kildangan Sound, for the building of which some people say I am indirectly responsible," I said, as I moved to the door of the cottage, and looked in the direction of the cutting along the mountainside.

"Well, you won't see it no more, because it was stole by thieving blackguards, it was, asthore."

"Stolen, Bridget? A railway stolen?"

"Ay, stole it was, sure enough, agrah. 'Twas for many years used only for carrying loads of periwinkles and cockles and cranuc and bornucs and rabbits for the quality in Dublin. And then at last the railway stopped running altogether, and the farmers tore up the rails and sleepers for fences and fires. My man, Darby Donnellan, stole the signal-box, and made two ass-carts out

¹ Gaelic. "Generous."

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of it. One of the ass-carts he sold to Padraic O'Conaire, the grand poet who gave up his grand palace in London where every day was Christmas Day to him, and where he played cards every night with the King and danced with the grand ladies, and came back to his own people in Connemara to write songs about Ireland. 'Twas in his blood anyways, him being a great-grandson of Flaithri O Maoil Conaire, who was a sweeter poet than Blind Raftery who wrote 'The Bard of Armagh,' or even than Cathal Buidhe itself. Yourself now, and you living in London, will often have met Padraic and him driving in his carriage to the races with the quality, I'll be bound."

"No, Bridget, I never saw Padraic in his carriage, but I met him occasionally in public-houses in London."

"You would that, agrah. Like all the great poets, poor Padraic is a bit too fond of a sup. My own man, and he's only a penny poet, he can't write a line barring he is middling full of porter. Sure didn't Padraic write a grand song about my Rosaneen—'Roisin Dhu'—'The Little Black Rose,' was the name he put on the song. Now, isn't it too bad that I disremember the words of that same song—a song with a grand blas, God help us! When people gets old, they get bothered in the brains."

She sighed, and going to the door, gazed down the winding path leading to her cottage.

"You're right, Bridget, about the stealing of the railway," I remarked, as I looked in vain for any trace of the permanent way of the track associated with the relief works inaugurated by Balfour, when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland. "It must have cost a tremendous amount of money to bore that tunnel through the shoulder of Slievbawn and to bridge that deep gully down there through which the Owenbeg flows."

"It did cost a power of money, agrah, and all for

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nothing in the long run. But they tell me that when Queen Victoria heard that the railway was stole, she went lepping mad about it, and gave a bit of her mind about it in the House of Commons to Jimmy McGloin, the M.P., him that had his letters took away from him by the I.R.A. And she says to him, says she, banging her gold crown on the table, 'I think, Mr. McGloin, 'tis a dirty shame after all the money I lost on that same railway to have it stole by a lot of griping con-acre farmers and that dirty porter-shark Darby Donnellan, the tramp-tinker! And Queen Victoria was telling the God's truth when she said that Darby was only a dirty porter-shark. Oh! wirra! wirra! He has my heart broke —so he has."

She sighed, and shaking her head, lapsed into reverie.

"But look, agrah," she resumed, after a prolonged spell of silence, "here's my Rosaneen coming up along the bohreen. That's the girleen you met and you coming along here. And look! 'Tis in her bare feet she is, too, and her shoes and stockings under her oxther, the ways of the mountainy girls. They always sit down on the side of the road and them after leaving Boynmore town, and they takes off their shoes, fearing them mountainy roads would cut them and spoil the creaks in them. Rosaneen is a wise, careful, saving colleen, God bless her."

The girl whom I had seen passing through Boynmore earlier in the day was walking briskly up the steep bohreen. Tall, dark-haired and dark-skinned, she was dressed in a frock of faded red homespun, barely reaching her knees. She was hatless, and a small plaid shawl was thrown carelessly over her shoulders. Though she was barefooted, she stepped nimbly along the rough, rocky track, carrying her shoes under her left arm. As she approached nearer I noticed that apparently, as a

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result of crouching over turf fires, her shapely legs were mottled from knees to shins with irregular rhomboidal purple patterns like the spiral markings of a mackerel.

She was within a few yards of the door when she stubbed her big toe against a sharp projecting stone. Letting the shoes drop, and grimacing with pain, she hopped around on one foot for a minute, all the while nursing the injured toe in her right hand.

Mrs. Donnellan rushed out and clasped her in her arms.

"Is my Rosheen dhu, ma lannah og macushla machree hurted?" she crooned.

"I'm not hurted, ma, agrasheen," Rosanna said stolidly, as she extricated herself from her mother's embrace. "And anyways, thanks be to God 'twas my big toe got that, and not my grand new shoes."

Picking up her shoes, she limped into the cottage, squatted on a creepie close to the turf fire, and proceeded to nurse her toe again.

"There's a porter-dance to-night at the Palays Dee Dance, ma, agrah," she said, while she levelled at me a chilly detached glance. "Jimmy McGloin is giving a half-barrel, and Thomasheen Mike O'Grady Mor another. It'll be nearly all jazz, but they want me to give an Irish jig, and me old da, if the I.R.A. doesn't get a hold of him for him to have robbed the mail the other day, is to play the tune for me. But he is drinking in Jimmy McGloin's now with some penny poet from Dublin, and he'll be that paralatic before night he won't be able to draw a screech from the old fiddle. And I'm afeared the I.R.A. will get him before night, so I want you to go along, ma, and bring him home at once. He's freckened of your tongue, but 'tis only how he'd give me a clout on the lug and me to try to put sense into him."

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“The dirty blackguard! Leave him to me, Rosaneen, agraah. And if the I.R.A. haven’t landed him they’ll get him later. Well, let you be making a cup of tea for this grand gentleman all the ways from Dublin. He is a son of the old doctor’s (God rest his soul!). And he has just come back to see the old town. When the pigs is fed, I’ll be back again, and tell you lots more about the doings of Darby, the common blackguard, agraah.”

A look of dawning interest supplanted the expression of cold indifference in Rosanna’s dark, lustrous eyes.

“Oh! it’s you, and I didn’t know you at first, because you have got a good deal stouter in the last five years. I never seen you since the rebellion when you came down with the soldiers and took me and me da out of Liberty Hall to Trinity College. I thought he was going to be hung that time. And ’tis the devil’s pity he wasn’t too, the same as his own great-grandfather was hung fornint the public in Castlebar for sheep-stealing. But isn’t it queer the ways you too disremember ever seeing me before?”

“Well, Rosanna, you have grown beyond all recognition since I saw you last, five years ago. You were then only fourteen—isn’t that so?”

“I was that, agraah. But tell me this. Do you mind the foxy detective with the hump and his tongue sticking out like a dog’s on a hot day? They tell me he was shot dead by the boys. Now was he?”

“Yes, poor Johnny Barton was shot.”

“And I heard me da reading out of a printed newspaper yesterday how the Tans half hung poor Mr. Darrell Figgis in Longford, and when they cut the rope he had such a crick in his neck that his head was twisted round, and that ’tis how he’ll walk arse foremost for the rest of his life. And now isn’t it cruel and hard-hearted you are to be laughing at the terrible thing that has

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happened to poor Mr. Figgis, agrah? And that grand lady, poor Mrs. Figgis, she must feel it terrible.”

“You got an exaggerated account of the hanging o’ Mr. Figgis, Rosanna,” I said, as soon as I recovered my composure. “I met him yesterday, and he told me that the Black-and-Tans just slipped a rope round his neck and pretended that they were going to hang him. They wanted to intimidate him, that’s all.”

“Now, isn’t me old da the dirty liar? Him knowing I couldn’t read nor write and him letting on there was things wrote in the printed newspapers wasn’t in them at all. But now, tell me, asthore, did you see e’er an ambush and you on your ways from Dublin?”

“No, Rosanna, thank God!”

“Well, I seen one near Rathnacopall. ’Twas a rotten ambush by the same token. ’Twas no sport at all looking on at it. Only one Tan killed and he let queer curses out of him and him tumbling the wild-cat in his death-grips over the side of the lorry. And another Tan was hurted, that was all. And two of the I.R.A. was hurted. But I heard Daneen Doogan, the penny poet, telling about the ambush at Carrowkennedy; a darling ambush, he says it was. Only one Tan and one I.R.A. man left alive out of two score on each side. Daneen made a grand song about it. Daneen is a lovely penny poet; the best, bar none, in Connaught, agrah. He made a grand song about me, too; a grander one even than the one the London-bred poet, Padraic O’Conaire made, and that was a darling one too.”

“It strikes me, Rosanna, that Dancen Doogan is rather fond of you, eh?”

“He is that, agrah, but sorra good that is for me or him. I’m afeared to marry him, because he doesn’t make steady money. He is a tinsmith as well as a poet, but there isn’t much work for tinsmiths them days. And

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if he makes good money for a bit selling his ballads at the fairs and patterns and races, then there's more times when he doesn't get enough to kill the drouth he gets by dint of singing all day long. And it takes a power of porter to kill that same drouth of me da. He is never satisfied barring he is full up to the knob of his gullet."

CHAPTER VI

THE TINKER AND THE POET

(1)

“LEND me the loan of that old song-book,” said the tinker to the poet. “A deep, smart man you must be to write a printed book the likes of that.”

“Oh, I didn’t write it—it was Yeats. That’s his photograph, with a facsimile of his handwriting underneath, on the first page.”

“Is it that hungry-looking chap with his old specs stuck on with a whang? Well, mebbe he could print his songs in a book, but he doesn’t look as if he had the wind to sing them on a fair-day and the bullocks and cattle-dealers roaring around him. And that’s his handwriting—is it? Well, the divil such a rotten scrawl I ever seen. He must have had no schooling at all at all. Wait till I read a couple of his old songs. Sure, myself I write songs and sing them at the fairs. Mebbe you’ve heard tell of Darby Donnellan, have you? Well, that’s me.”

Tall, swarthy, gaunt, ill-shaven and scowling, the tinker tapped himself on the chest with an air of hauteur. For a moment his lank frame straightened rigidly, then slumped into its normal pose: a spasmodic, gyratory twitching in its mouldy garments, subtly suggestive of insect trouble.

The poet made a graceful sweep with the broad-brimmed black hat affected by Bloomsbury and Chelsea Bohemians.

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"Always delighted to meet a fellow-bard, Mr. Donnellan. I regret, however, that I have not heard of you before, but as I have specially come all the way from London to this wild West Mayo coast in order to study Kiltartanese——"

"Kiltartanese?" cut in the tinker dazedly. "What the——"

"Oh, you don't follow. Well, Kiltartanese is a term facetiously applied to the dialect—that quaint, poetic Anglo-Irish—spoken by the peasants along the Gaedhealteacht, the Celtic fringe of Connaught. Its ablest exponents are perhaps Lady Gregory and Synge. I want to study on the spot that crisp idiom, and to get the nuances of meaning of those elusive Irish expletives like 'moryah,' 'arrah,' 'musha,' 'begorrah,' and a host of others. Kiltartanese is richly peppered with expletives of the type of the Greek particles. Funny, isn't it, that the word 'arrah' has a curious analogy in meaning, in pronunciation, and almost in spelling to a Greek word——"

"Would you mind holding your whisht a minute, Mister—— What's this you said your name was?"

"Boyd-Brown. Basil Boyd-Brown."

"I'd disremember that name in a minute. It's like the name you'd put on a racehorse. So I'll call you just plain Mr. Brown, if it's all the same to you. Now, I want to read a song I seen in this song-book called 'The Fiddler of Dooney.' Oh! the devil take it! I've lost the page now."

The tinker moistened his thumb in his mouth, and jabbing at the right-hand corner of the pages, rapidly turned over leaf after leaf, leaving a trail of dirty smudges in his wake.

"I'd have you know, young man, that I'm as good at the fiddle as I am at making songs and singing them.

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Man, but I can make the old fiddle talk—talk just like a Christian at fairs and at porter-dances, and I'll bet I'd leave that fiddler of Dooney nowhere! And me to play the 'Moddhhereen Rhu,' you'd hear the hounds yelling and the clatter of the horses' hoofs and the shouting of the Galway Blazers, or the North Mayo Harriers mebbe, and them tearing over the stone walls of Galway or the warm fields of Tirawley. And often I coaxed the birds off the bushes and them hopping around me listening to me playing 'The Blackbird.' But where the divil is that song at all at all? I've turned over every leaf in this ould song-book three times. Oh, begob, here we are:

'When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea.
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Maharabuiee.'

I passed my brother and cousin;
They read in their books of prayer.
I read in my book of songs
That I bought at the Sligo fair.'"

"Beautiful—exquisite—isn't it?" said the poet.

"Beautiful, moryah! I wrote finer songs and me blind, rotten, paralatic drunk. And I'm not like the fiddler of Dooney, buying songs at Sligo fair. I make my own songs. 'Twas me wrote 'The Noble Lynchehaun.' But wait till I turn over a few more leaves. What's this? 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree.'"

The tinker eyed the printed lines with the cynical nausea of a cat sniffing a piece of tainted meat. His lip curled with scorn.

"Innisfree! A rotten little island in the middle of Loch Gill, all rocks and scraws and whins. A philibeen, let along a rabbit, wouldn't get pasture there. The only

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thing I ever seen come from Innisfree was a sup of poteen would take the linings off the belly of a jackass. But wait a minute, avic. The poet that printed this song-book, what did you say his name was?"

"Yeats."

"Yeats! Yeats! Now, I wonder would he be the same penny poet that's a near friend, three akin, or second cousin, mebbe, of the Pollexfens, the big Sligo flour people—would he?"

"Yes, so I believe."

"Well, now, do you tell me? An' isn't it a wonder now big people the likes of them with a power of money didn't give him a better living than him to be a poet. There isn't no money in them same songs, and 'tis me that does it as a side-line that ought to know it. But this chap Yeats wrote two fine songs, 'Tipperary' and a choice hanging song, 'The Night before Larry was Stretched,' though my great friend, the Provost of Trinity College, and Johnny Barton said that he didn't make them two songs at all."

"Who is this Barton, Mr. Donnellan? A critic?"

"Well, he's a corpse now. Before he was knocked all of a suddint out of his soul-case by the I.R.A. he was a big flat-footed detective in the D.M.P.s. And, by the same token he didn't think this Yeats any great shakes of a poet, though the Provost of Trinity College did."

"I would rather accept the verdict of the Provost of Trinity than that of a Dublin policeman on matters aesthetic. "Would you mind returning my book to me, Mr. Donnellan?"

The tinker tossed the book scornfully back to the poet.

"That's only a cod of a song-book. God forgive me for wasting my time reading the likes. There's no money in them songs. You wouldn't sell a dozen of them and

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you roaring all day long at a fair. The only songs that will bring crowds round you to buy sheaf after sheaf of ballads are songs about going to jail or dying for Ireland, or about racehorses and boxers and coursing matches, or, better still, about men kicking in their death-grips on the gallows. There was a grand song I wrote about my own great-grandfather who was hung for sheep-stealing in Castlebar forinst the public in the year of the Big Wind, the same day that the great 'Fighting Fitzgerald' broke the rope and had to be hung all over again. A lovely song it is—the sort of song would make your toes open and shut."

"Please sing it for me, Mr. Donnellan."

"'Tis a song, young man, has soft, rich notes in it like the song of the blackbird and the thrush and the yellow-hammer blended together, and a man would want to be middling full of porter to give it the right blas. And you to try it and you cold sober—well, it's this way—it takes a fair flow of porter to set the poetry rumbling in your insides, and—"

"Oh, by the way, let's have another drink," cut in the poet. "What will it be?"

"Well, thank you kindly, but I wouldn't say now that I wouldn't have another pint of porter. But about that song about the hanging of my great-grandfather, it made enough money for me many's the time to send me home that blind that I disremembered next morning how I got to bed. And once the very next thing I could remember after selling the last of a hundred ballads in Micky Muldoon's at Boynmore fair was the sergeant giving me two black eyes the next morning, and my lying on the flat of my back in the lock-up. Manufacturing hand-made evidence he was that I had been drunk and disorderly and blaspheming the police the night before. Good luck, Mr. Brown. A grand creamy pint

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that is, and no doubt. Jimmy McGloin pulls the best pint in Boynmore. I'll say that for him, though he's not the same man since he lost his J.P., to say nothing of his seat in the House of Commons. He was swept out with the rest of the buckos at the general election."

"Well, Mr. Donnellan, what about the song?"

"Aye, to be sure, wait till I get a couple of sups of porter, for my throat is like a limekiln. How's this it goes? The-la-the-la-the-la-the-la-the-la. Striving I am to get the go of it."

Tapping his glass on the counter, he beat time with his heels on the sawdusted floor. Then he cleared his throat and struck up in rasping, alcoholic baritone:

"My name is Darby Donnellan, a tinker is my trade,
And all my life the lonesome roads of Ireland sure I
strayed,
Until I came to Cuilchimagh, and there a sheep I stole,
So on the gallows I must die, and God forgive my soul.
The trial 'twas in Castlebar, and——"

"Hands up, Darby the Drouth." These words, barked sharply by a young man attired in a trench coat and armed with a revolver, cut short the tinker's song and made him wheel round abruptly in the direction of the challenging voice.

"Hands up, is it? You pup! Hands up, moryah! Toes up 'twill be for you if——"

"Put them up or I'll blow your head off, Darby. Quick!"

Darby's hands shot up like semaphores.

In the wake of the young man followed two others, also with drawn revolvers. One of the latter stepped up to the poet and prodded him in the ribs with his weapon.

"Put them up."

Up went the poet's hands with the impromptu jerk

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of an epileptic throwing a fit. He tried to speak, but his tongue clung to a dry palate.

"Look here, my young bucko," said Darby truculently, "I'm not going to keep my hands stuck up like this. There's nothing in my pockets but my pipe and a few bob. And might I ask by what authority do you interfere with a couple of poets and them talking about things you know nothing about, God help you?"

"By the authority of the Irish Republic."

(2)

The Boynmore Sinn Fein Parish Court was holding a midnight session in a disused barn close to the beetling cliffs where Boynmore Bay opened into the Atlantic. A reek of musty hay, blended with the tang of decayed seaweed, hung in the air. In the spells of silence which punctuated the proceedings the scurrying of the rats under the floor rang antiphonically with the breaking of the waves on the iron rocks outside.

Several minor cases were first disposed of by a very juvenile judge in homespuns, who sat at a deal table on which reposed two lighted candles stuck in the necks of empty Guinness bottles. Two armed Volunteers stood respectively on the right and left side of the table.

"I've got a presentiment that the Black-and-Tans will pay us a visit before we break up, Inspector," said the judge, glancing uneasily at the rat-chewed door. "Many more cases?"

"Two more, Judge," replied an official in a trench coat, who looked even more juvenile than the president of the court. "Yes—only two. One is against an Englishman, whom we arrested on suspicion of espionage."

"Isn't that a case for a court-martial?" said the judge testily.

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"Quite so, but I submit that we should enquire into the case first to see if there is sufficient ground to send him for court-martial. We can't afford to run any risk where there is any suspicion of spying."

"I see, I see. Well, put him forward."

Escorted by two Volunteers, the poet stood facing the judge. The clerk of the court handed him the Bible, and he took the oath.

"Well, sir, what's your name?" said the judge, trying to look ruthless.

"Basil Boyd-Brown."

"I hate hyphenated names. Job?"

"Poet."

"That's not a job—it's a disease. Any other means of subsistence?"

"Occasional journalistic contributions."

"What are you doing down here in these dangerous times? Faking reports for England's yellow rags—eh?"

"Certainly not. I loathe the yellow press."

"Picking blackberries, mushrooms, periwinkles or cockles?"

"No."

"What, then?"

"I came here to study the dialect of the aborigines of the western seaboard, and I was arrested and forcibly brought here. And I protest——"

"No good," cut in the judge curtly; "waste of time—that's all. If you're guilty, we'll shoot you. If you are innocent, we'll apologise. Naturally, we are very suspicious of Englishmen found dodging about here without apparent reason. You're a fool to come down here in these wild times. I say, Inspector, under what circumstances did you arrest this man?"

"He was drinking in Jimmy McGloin's with Darby the Drouth."

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"We were discussing about Kiltartanese and about songs when these fellows butted in," interposed the poet.

"If you refer again to the Irish Republican Police as 'these fellows' you will be charged with contempt of court," said the judge sharply. "Well, Inspector, seeing this foreigner with Darby the Drouth, you got suspicious, eh?"

"Yes, Judge, because Darby has a very bad record as a vagabond, and I wouldn't put it past him to spy on the I.R.A. What's more, they were colloguing in the licensed premises of Jimmy McGloin, who has been very hostile to the Republic owing to his letters being taken away."

The judge looked puzzled.

"His letters taken away—what do you mean?"

"He was always proud of the M.P. and J.P. at the end of his name. It broke his heart to lose them, and he is always lamenting about the 'Pledge-bound Party.' We saw the Englishman taking notes about what he was saying only yesterday, and we kept him under observation and detained him as a suspect this afternoon. On searching him, we found that he had a notebook secreted on his person, the contents of which seemed mysterious to us. We thought that maybe they were codes. Here is the notebook."

The judge examined the notebook page by page. The smile which played over his face as he glanced over the first few pages developed into a hearty fit of laughter as he went on.

"I am afraid, Inspector, you've made a bit of an ass of yourself. The contents of this notebook bear out the gentleman's statement as to the purpose of his visit to Boynmore. We owe him an apology. His only crime is that he is a poet, but that is hardly a penal offence. Perhaps you were influenced, Inspector, by Saint

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Columcille's suggestion at the Council of Drumceat that all the poets should be banished from Ireland."

"You may recollect," interposed the poet, "that Plato in his *Republic* advocated a pogrom against poets. Perhaps this ultra-officious official was taking his cue from him."

"I'm sorry," said the judge, "but my knowledge of English politics and English history is very limited. Well, anyhow, Mr. Boyd-Brown, I'm very sorry for the idiotic blunder that the Inspector has made, and I apologise to you in the name of the Irish Republic. Call the next case, Inspector."

"The Irish Republic versus Darby Donnellan."

"Hello, Darby the Drouth," said the judge, "so you're here again. What is he up for now, Inspector?"

"Holding up and looting a mail-car in the name of the Irish Republic."

"That's a hell of a lie," cut in Darby. "I never done the likes. I dare you to prove it. Taking a mail-bag, the property of the enemy, is not looting. It's expropriating spoils of war."

"When I searched him after arresting him I found a bundle of postal orders in his possession. I also found on enquiry that he had changed one of the orders with Jimmy McGloin. It was an open postal order—so Jimmy McGloin acted quite innocently in changing it."

"Is that the man that lost his letters? Why is he not here to give evidence?"

"He was beaten up by Tans who raided his shop last night. Here are the postal orders I found on Darby's person."

"If I recollect rightly," said the judge, as he examined the sheaf of postal orders, "Darby the Drouth was up before me about three months ago for tying two asses tail to tail and driving them through the town of

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Boynmore on a crowded fair-day. I think you said that he had a very bad criminal record."

"A shocking bad record, Judge. He got jail many times under the old British régime for robbing poor-boxes, tills, hen-roosts and washing-lines, and for stealing asses belonging to other tinkers. During the Easter Week Rising he used Liberty Hall after the Citizen Army had evacuated it as a storing-place for the loot he had collected. He was removed thence in custody after the building had been shelled by the *Helga*, to Trinity College, where Sergeant Barton of the 'G' division of the D.M.P., who was executed last year by orders of the I.R.A., gave evidence that he had among other offences posed as a 'clergyman of various denominations.' These are Barton's own words. On that very night Darby escaped from custody, taking with him the *Book of Kells*, a bottle of whiskey, a jar of poteen and a cap and gown, the property of the late Provost of Trinity College, the Rev. Sir John Pentland Mahaffy."

"Oh," said the judge with a smile, "I vaguely remember reading about it at the time. And I recollect that Johnny Barton said that Darby was a deep, smart man. Yes, Darby is versatile. Well, what happened to him afterwards?"

"He went as a trimmer on a tramp steamer plying between Dublin and Liverpool, and on one of his outward trips he let fly from the aft gun for use against submarines, and nearly blew the town of Dublin to pieces, only he was such a rotten shot."

"Oh yes, I have a dim recollection of the incident," said the judge. "But what was his motive? Just a drunken freak?"

"He had been thrown out of a quayside pub shortly before the boat was due to leave, and so to have his revenge he fired in the direction of the pub. There was

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a bit of a row about it, you may remember. For a long time the incident was wrapped in mystery, until after an indignation meeting in Dublin and some questions in the House of Commons, the facts of the case were stated by the First Lord of the Admiralty. I'm afraid I'm delaying the court rather long, but I want to point out clearly that the prisoner, Darby Donnellan, has a very bad record."

"A pretty bad record," commented the judge. "Well, Darby, have you anything to say in your defence?"

"Lots, your worship. I——"

The judge eyed the tinker with bleak dislike.

"We don't want any of this 'your worship' funkeyism in the Irish Republican Parish Court. Leave that feudal mummary to the courts of monarchical England."

"May I crave the courtesy of the court for just a moment?" said the poet, craning his neck forward.

The judge stared at him open-mouthed. "Er—er—it's rather unusual to allow such interruptions," came his caustic reply. "However, go on. You deserve a little latitude, but please don't abuse it."

"Thank you very much. I only wished to remark that the Irish Republic is rather inconsistent in its attitude towards titles. A recent letter from Mr. De Valera, President of the Irish Republic, to the British Premier opened with the words which were interpreted to me as running thus in English: 'O noble person, Lloyd George.' Now no Englishman would dream of addressing Lloyd George as 'O noble person.' Well, my dilemma——"

"That will do," interposed the judge frigidly. "This is a court of law, not a debating society. Well, Darby, what have you to say in your defence?"

"I was expropriating the mails of the army of occupation."

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“You were robbing the people’s postal orders. In punishment for your crime you will have a placard placed on your chest with the words ‘I am a robber’ written thereon in large letters, and you will be chained to the railings of Boynmore Church for——”

A prolonged shrill whistle from outside cut short his speech.

“The Black-and-Tans,” gasped the Inspector, drawing his revolver.

Just then the door was thrown violently open and an armed Volunteer dashed excitedly up to the judge’s table.

“The Tans are coming up the road,” he shouted. “No—no—you can’t get away by the door. Jump through the back window as quick as you can. There’s a whole lorry-load of them coming along like hell.”

Two minutes later Darby and the poet were standing alone in the Boynmore Sinn Fein Parish Court. A volley of rifle-shots rang out, followed by intermittent barkings of revolvers. Then came a bomb explosion, with screams of agony and curses in its wake. A pause. Then a renewed spate of rifle and revolver-shots. Then silence—a long spell of nerve-racking, ominous silence.

Darby peered cautiously through the window.

“The Tans and the Volunteers is at it hammer and tongs, and I hope they’ll wipe each other out. Ireland will never have peace till there’s an end of all peelers, British and Republican. And, cripes, look, if that isn’t Bos-gan-Soggarth himself lying on the flat of his back, kicking his heels against the ground in his death-grips. Easy now, and as soon as the two sets of scuts have knocked hell out of other, we can slither out of the window and turn all his pockets inside out. Look at him now, swiggling and writhing. A man dies hard and dirty with a bullet, barring he gets one through the heart or

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the head. I'd sooner die at the butt of the rope myself, like my great-grandfather done, him grinning and making faces at the people around him with his tongue a mile stuck out. 'Twas stuck out still after him giving his last kick. He done it through devilment just to show he didn't give a damn for nobody."

The fight outside waxed fiercer. Darby, with one eye over the window ledge, watched the succession of flashes that lit up the darkness. Then suddenly the firing, while still continuous, diminished in volume, grew more and more faint. The tinker rose excitedly and danced around the room.

"One side is chasing the other," he said, "and it doesn't matter which, so long as they clear away to blazes out of here. We had better be off as quick as we can. Where's my old hat? Some omadhaun lifted it!"

"Whose coat is that on the table?" said the poet. "We had better hurry up. I'm feeling uneasy."

"Bejapers! Huroo! That's his worship's coat. Judge, moryah! Left it behind him in his fright. Putting gosoors across his knee in the schoolroom at Clashmore is all he's good for. Did you mind how he was the first through the window when he heard of the Tans?"

"Do you think—do you think it will be safe to venture out?" said the poet, his teeth chattering, his knees aquake.

"Have you any lugs? The sound of the shots is very far off now. And we had better be off while we have any chance. We'll make for Kildangan, and, after we get a couple of sups there, and a bottle of whiskey against the road, we'll put the ass to the cart and belt away for Clifden. And us on the way I'll sing a song for you that's rumbling around in my brains this minute. 'The Tans and the Boys' is the name I'll put on it. It's wonderful the grand songs I can make, and me under the mildness of drink."

CHAPTER VII

THE TINKER, THE TAN AND THE POET

(1)

“WELL, then you don’t like Yeats’s poetry, Darby?” said the poet with an air of finality, as he and the tinker jogged through the night in the little red-painted ass-cart along the rugged mountain road towards Dhu Lough. A twisting streak of white against an ebon background was all they could see ahead of them.

Darby took his short clay out of his mouth, and spat with a venom pregnant with symbolism.

“No, I do not like it, because there’s neither head nor tail nor sense nor reason in that old song-book of his you lent me the loan of, and because, as I told you before, I don’t like the likeness of him in it, the dead spit of a pookah’s miseroom, with his old specs stuck on with a whang and his old scrawl of handwriting would disgrace a gosoor of seven. Himself and his ‘Fiddler of Dooney’—fiddler, moryah! This old jackass, me heart’s broke with him. Will you get on out of that you dirty old snail! The curse of Cromwell and the Black-and-Tans cripple ye! And me in dread we’ll be overtaken by the I.R.A. or the Tans.”

A hail of blows descended on the poor brute.

“Oh, Darby! You are talking through your hat. Does it follow because a man wears glasses and writes a bad hand that he isn’t a good poet? Now listen to this, and I bet its rhythm and sentiment will alike appeal to you:

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‘I went out to the hazel-wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel-wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread:
And when white moths were on the wing
And moth-like stars were glimmering out
I dropped the berry in a stream,
And caught a little silver trout——’’

“Arrah, will you hold your whisht, young man?” cut in the tinker with another spate of symbolic saliva. “Catching a trout with a berry, is it? Well, I never heard the likes. Now look here to me. Do you know anything at all about fishing?”

“Well—no,” replied the poet vaguely.

“So I thought. Well, I do. I know all about river and sea-fishing. I know the fish that will bite to lug-worm, hairy-bait, cockles and bornucs, and them that likes a tasty bit out from a live mackerel, and I snatched and dynamited salmon and caught them by torchlight; and I could tie a fly in five minutes would make the mouth of any bloody salmon or trout water! And I done a thing that nobody never done before, I’ll bet. I hid behind the big rock at the bridge and shot a salmon through the head with a revolver and him leppin at the flies. So nobody could learn me anything the ways to bait a fish-hook. But I never heard tell of anyone catching a trout with a berry. Gone simple he has, the man that wrote that cod of a song-book. But, now, tell me, would you like to hear a grand song that’s rumbling about in my insides?”

“I’d love to, Darby.”

“Well, wait till I get a few pints of porter or maybe a couple of sups of barley poteen, and it will come grand out of me with the proper blas on it and all. I can’t do it proper barring me brains is well lit up with liquor.”

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"Surely you haven't finished that flask of whiskey you found on the dead Black-and-Tan? It may fire your muse."

Darby sniffed contemptuously. "That old half-pint—is it? That's gone long ago. 'Twouldn't physic a snipe—so it wouldn't, begob. Well, wait till we get a drop at Jimmy O'Toole's and the song that's boiling around inside me will just squirt out like froth from a fresh-tapped barrel of porter. The name I put on it is 'The Open Thrapple for the Open Bottle for the Open Road.' And there's another grand song—a choice song brewing inside me—'The Dead Tan's Boots.' 'Tis about that dead Tan I took the boots off. They're a grand pair of boots, too—only that they are a bit too big for me. However, they'll be handy for hiding the money and the watch that I got on him. Peelers' boots is always full of feet. But didn't I near die of fright when I looked on the face of the dead Tan and I seen that 'twas Bos-gan-soggarth himself?"

The poet looked questioning bewilderment.

"Bos-gan-soggarth! Funny sound—like Chinese."

"'Tisn't Chinese, then. 'Tis Irish. Easy known you're an Englishman. That's a nickname they put on him, and he answers to it himself now, and is proud of it. His real name is Captain—oh!—some Bloody Thing or Other of the Auxiliary Police Force. 'Bos-gan-soggarth' means 'death without the priest,' or 'sudden death,' and they put that name on him on account of the big power of members of the I.R.A. that he has killed—and killed in cold blood, too. Now I'm not afeared of no man alive or dead, but I don't mind owning up that a cold sweat broke out on me when I looked on the face of that dead blackguard and knew that the curse of County Mayo was lifted. I found a big fat roll of notes on him too, and a grand gold watch.

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Didn't I tell you I knew he wouldn't be such a fool as to pass by the rich tills of Clashmore without helping himself? I'm going to count my little fortune when I get as far as Jimmy's. Only it's as dark as the hobs of hell I'd count it now. And I'm afeared to strike a light. Lucky I was to get away from that bloody Parish Court. Begob—yes! Just as they were going to chain me to the chapel gates, down comes the Tans on the boys!"

(2)

Darby and the poet sat on two creepies in front of a roaring turf fire in Jimmy O'Toole's kitchen. Each of them had a bowl of steaming poteen-punch in his hand. The poet eyed his poteen suspiciously, but Darby took long sonorous swigs at his.

"Don't be afeared of it," urged the tinker. "It's the best poteen in Mayo, not like the cabbage-water they call poteen in Innisfree. Jimmy O'Toole's poteen is the stuff they make at the butt of the Reek—it's that mild that they call it Saint Patrick's eye-water. 'Tis a grand drink surely, is poteen, if you want to get up enough guts to split a man's head with a loy or an ash-plant, but a few pints of porter is better for coaxing the poetry out of a man. Oh, wait a minute till I see how much money I found on Bos-gan-soggarth's corpse. Begob, wasn't it decent of him now to present me with a roll of notes and a pair of boots after he had scattered the Sinn Fein Court?"

Diving his hand into an inside pocket he produced a wallet, which he opened with feverish haste. He abstracted a sheaf of notes, and counted them carefully.

"A hundred and thirty pounds in all, glory be to God," he whispered to the poet, cupping his hands round his mouth. "Whisht, man, I'm made up for life.

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I'm going over to see the Derby this summer. Oh, where's the old watch? Here it is. If it isn't gold then I'm Lloyd George, and I'd sooner be the devil from the flaming hobs of hell itself. Wait till I open it. What's this inside? 'To Mr. J. P. McGloin, M.P., J.P., from the U.I.L., Boynmore.' Oh, that's a token of gratitude for his 'fights on the floor of the House' on behalf of the United Irish League. The United Irish League is like last year's snow now. Poor old 'Recruiting-sergeant McGloin,' as we used to call him, with his blather about the 'poor Belgiums' and the 'Huns.' Wait till I go over to see the Derby, and I'll let on I'm a distressed Irish loyalist boycotted by the I.R.A., and having my letters took from me, the M.P. and the J.P., for me to be a member of the pledge-bound party that supported the constitutional movement and the war in defence of the Belgiums. I'm telling you now I'll be Cum Grano Salis with them in England. I'm told there's grand chances over there now for distressed Irish loyalists."

(3)

The sun was just rising over the north-eastern shoulder of Croagh Patrick as the little ass-cart topped the height of Cregganbawn.

"'Tis a great comfort, even if it is a bit of a bother to put on a clean shirt after wearing the same one for a couple of months," said the tinker. "'Twas grand and handy finding it airing on the whins outside the schoolmaster's, and sure didn't I leave me own one in the whins for him instead, even if he has to call in the Congested Districts Board before he becomes a tenant of it? 'Tis a queer twist things have taken when the schoolmaster—Parish Court Judge, moryah!—sentences me

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last night to be tied to the chapel railings for robbing the mail-car, and us swapping shirts with one another at daybreak, on the unbeknownst to him and all. And tied to the railings I'd be, too, only for the Black-and-Tans raiding the court, and leaving me and you high and dry there alone. 'Twas great fun to see how the brat-walloper leaped for the window. He ran before him like a scalded cat, so he did. Aye, and not him alone, but the lot of them."

"Oh, Darby, fair is fair. They put up a splendid fight when they got into the open. I'm sure most of them must have been killed during that terrific fusillade."

"I hope they were, because neither Tans nor Volyunteers is friends of them that has to travel the lonesome roads for a living. Tans and Volyunteers are all burjoisy, grinding the faces of the proletariat. But I'll bet the schoolmaster kept up the sprint at which he started. Parish Court Judge, moryah! May the divil break the hasp of his back! And may the Tans raid every other Sinn Fein Parish Court in Ireland, and may them and the Volyunteers tear other to tatters the ways of the Kilkenny cats! Both the Tans and the Sinn Feiners is all burjoisy, grinding the faces of the down-trodden proletariat. But the day is coming when the worm will turn and expropriate the instruments and means of production from the exploiters——"

(4)

"Put them up!"

With a sotto-voce oath Darby dropped the reins and put up his hands. The Black-and-Tan whose Webley was trained on the tinker's forehead looked ruthless. And in his wake stood two others with drawn revolvers.

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“Get out, the pair of you—quick about it too, or I’ll blow you both to blazes.”

With alacrity born of terror the poet literally leaped from the cart. The tinker’s exit was more leisurely, and was punctuated with lurid profanities. He eyed his captors with studied insolence, and gave a snort that spoke volumes of scorn.

“Keep your hands up—higher—higher! We want to search you both, you blinking cut-throats.”

He ran his hands swiftly through Darby’s pockets, in which he found nothing but an old clay pipe, some coppers and an ounce of tobacco, all of which he put back again. He then searched the poet’s pockets, and having scrutinised some letters which he found therein, returned them to their owner.

“Now, then, at the double, round the corner, you pair of swine. You’ll find a bunch of dirty Shinners filling up a trench across the road which was cut by gunmen during the night. You’ve got to give a hand at the job.”

Stimulated by a few kicks apiece from the Black-and-Tans, Darby and the poet set off at a smart pace round the bend of the road. They had gone about two hundred yards when the abrupt order, “Halt,” brought them up with a jerk. About fifty yards ahead of them they saw some twenty men of all ages, and apparently representing every phase of small-town social castes, plying picks, shovels and spades with feverish energy. Black-and-Tans with drawn revolvers sauntered leisurely up and down in front of the toilers, directing operations.

Darby had barely realised that he was confronting a “press gang,” when one of the gingers, after shouting an order, wheeled round and strolled slowly towards himself and the poet.

“Holy Mother of God!” soliloquised Darby, as the

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man came nearer. "It's Bos-gan-soggarth's ghost. Either that—or mebbe he was only wounded! I hope he doesn't notice the boots, or I'll lose them, and the gold watch and the roll of notes too. I'll blarney him a bit. He's got a plaster over his eye."

"Hello, Darby the Drouth! What are you doing here?" said the auxiliary as he recognised the tinker.

"Going my rounds along the lonesome roads of Mayo I was, Captain Bos-gan—begging your honour's pardon, Captain—"

"Call me Bos-gan-soggarth—I like the name," interrupted the auxiliary with a grin. "Well, go on, Darby."

"Well, this English gentleman is going along the roads with me learning the trade of song-writing, and—"

"Easy a minute, Darby—easy a minute," cut in the auxiliary with a half-amused, half-puzzled look as his eyes travelled swiftly from the tinker to the poet. "Now then, young man, you speak for yourself. What are you doing here? You're a stranger, seemingly."

"I'm a poet by profession. I came to Mayo to study local idiom, and I have found Darby an able exponent of it. The writings of Synge and Lady Gregory had a peculiar fascination for me, and—"

"I see—I see. You're one of those writer johnnies," broke in the auxiliary breezily. "And you're an Englishman; consequently I suppose you've nothing to do with those swinish Shinners. Very good, show me your credentials and you can hop it. And take my tip and hop quickly too."

The poet handed over his papers, which the auxiliary scrutinised very carefully. While he was doing so the poet kept searching pocket after pocket, again and again, feverishly. His face had an expression of tense anxiety.

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"I'm perfectly satisfied that you are a loyal citizen," said the auxiliary at last. "Here are your papers. Go ahead, yourself and the tinker. I wish you luck, and—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the poet. "That policeman behind you with the red nose went through my pockets before you came along. He took my money along with my papers. He returned the latter, but forgot to return the former."

The accused man flared crimson.

"What the devil—"

His superior officer wheeled round in a flash and cut him short.

"Now then, Ginger Nose, it won't do. Hand back every penny you took from this gentleman."

"But, Captain—"

"Do as I tell you and at once. I believe him. I don't believe you. Robbing Shinners is a different matter. This is an Englishman."

The Black-and-Tan went pale and, after darting a glance of suppressed fury at the poet, abstracted a bundle of notes from an inside pocket, and handed them to him. The poet counted the notes carefully. He counted them a second time, and looked puzzled.

"I—I—I say," he stammered, "I only had ten pounds and some odd silver, and he has given me eighteen pounds and no silver."

The auxiliary laughed heartily. "Ginger Nose is a bad book-keeper. He should have his takings from the Clashmore tills audited. Well, young man, you just take your own money out of what Ginger Nose gave you, and pass me on the rest."

"I don't know how much loose silver I had, so I'll just take my ten pounds," said the poet.

The auxiliary waved his hand airily.

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“Oh, don’t boggle at a trifle. Take eleven pounds and give me the rest.”

The poet did as he was bid.

“You bloody fool,” hissed Darby audibly, as he shot a glance of contempt at the poet.

“Eh? What was that you said, Darby?” half whispered the auxiliary, while his glance swept the tinker swiftly from head to foot. Suddenly his face clouded and his eyes narrowed to mere slits.

“Where did you get those boots, Darby?” he said in slow, measured tones.

“What’s that got to do with you, Bos-gan-soggarth?” retorted the tinker truculently.

“I’ll let you know presently,” said the auxiliary on the same deliberate note as before. “Ginger Nose, take the other men with you and get on with the road-mending, and leave me to deal with the tinker, and I’ll soon settle my account with him. As for you, young man, you just hop into the tinker’s cart and take the road to the left—not the one straight ahead, which they are repairing. It will take you to Kildangan, where you’ll get a train for Dublin or Galway. Take my tip and clear out of Mayo.”

(5)

Glad to be so easily rid both of the tinker and the Black-and-Tans, the poet had just whipped the ass to a smart trot, when his alert ear caught the sound of clattering brogues in his rear. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw the tinker, who was frantically beckoning to him to halt.

A moment later Darby had vaulted into the cart, had seized the reins, and had flogged the ass to a frenzied gallop.

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"How—how did you get away?" gasped the poet.

"Leave me alone a minute," panted Darby. "Reach for the bottle that's in the back of the cart. Take the cork out of it and hand it to me. I've a horrible drought on me with the fright I got."

He took a long pull at the bottle and handed it back to the poet.

"Aye, that's great," he said with a grunt of euexia. "How did I get away, is it? Well, when Bos-gan-sog-garth had me alone with him, he cocked his revolver at my head and stood right in front of me, and ordered me to take off my boots. Well, I loosened the laces of one of them, and let on I was just going to take it off, when all of a suddint I gripped him by the two ankles as he stood with his legs straddled wide in front of him, and I got my head right against his belly and gave him the 'Flying Mare' over my shoulder. I heard his head crack on the hard road, but I didn't look round to see, but made off like blazes. I'll swear he's roasting on the hot hobs of hell this minute. If the Tans catch me I'll get my thrapple drew in Castlebar jail. And a couple of nights ago I'm sure I heard the banshee, though my daughter Rosanna said 'twas only the screech of the curlew, or mebbe a corgriann—a bird you seldom hear now in Mayo. But anyways, the Tans can't follow us up this narrow mountainy bohreen in their lorry. We'll soon be at Dhu Lough—a grand place for all kinds of game. It's that lousy with snipe a bit further on that, begob, if you only stepped off the road into the bog there 'tis how they'd eat you alive if you hadn't a gun with you. And there's hundreds of wild duck around Dhu Lough quacking to you for God's sake to shoot them. And look here to me, I've an old shot-gun hid in the false bottom to the ass-cart."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER AND THE POET

(1)

"Do you know Matthew Arnold's 'Scholar Gipsy,' Darby?" said the poet, as the little ass-cart bowled through the gathering dusk along the undulating, lumpy road that led from Dhu Lough to Cregganbawn.

"Matthew Arnold doesn't own 'Scholar Gipsy.' It's Boss Croker's gelding, let me tell you, young man. Do I know 'Scholar Gipsy,' is it? Do I know his pedigree as far back as the Flood? He's by 'Garryowen' out of 'Granuaille,' by 'Cuchullain' out of 'Maeve,' and he won the Garrown Plate at Limerick and the Connemara Plate at Galway and the Stewards' Plate at Leopardstown and the Meath Farmers' Cup at Fairyhouse, and—— Eh——what's up? Is it throwing a fit you are, or have you got the dancing staggers like the pig that bit the doctor's gosoor the year of the big blight, when Balfour came to Boynmore? Mebbe you'd have the audacity to laugh at——"

"Oh, Darby! don't——don't be a silly ass! You don't know——"

"Don't be a silly ass, is that it?" yelled the tinker. "Is it putting yourself against me you are about the knowledge of horseflesh? I suppose you think since you bought that ass and cart from me that you're the most horse-knowledgeable and the most ass-knowledgeable

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man in Connacht! Eh—whoa there! You very nearly ran us into the ditch there. There's no traffic along here; so keep her head to the centre of the road, and don't be bearing so hard on the bit. You'll tear the mouth out of the beast."

"Darby, I'll burst if you don't stop," gasped the poet between paroxysms of laughter. "I'm talking of a poem—not of a racehorse."

"A what?"

"A poem. Matthew Arnold's 'Scholar Gipsy.' Now, Darby, do listen to me. The 'Scholar Gipsy' is a poem based on the true story of a young scholar who left Oxford University and joined a band of gipsies and adopted their garb and ways generally. He devoted his time to studying their mystic lore, and never returned to civilised life again. Now, ever since I bought this ass-cart from you I feel that I have become a tinsmith myself——"

"You a tinsmith, is it?" guffawed the tinker. "You a tinsmith? You're as nuch a tinsmith as you are a driver, and—— Oh, becipes! Give me the reins, or you'll land the two of us in the ditch!"

"Don't worry, Darby! I'll manage him. I say, Darby, do be serious. I'm deadly serious myself. Now, Darby, I like your fraternity, I like you, and I want to learn your craft. I don't mean merely your trade as a tinsmith, but I want to acquire your craft as a song-maker, because——"

"You needn't tell me the because, young man. I know it. You're after my daughter, Rosanna, and you heard her singing and praising the songs that Dan Doogan, who is after her also, makes. And let me tell you that Dan Doogan makes the best ballads in Connacht, barring myself, and sells more sheets at fairs and patterns than all the other penny poets put together.

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"Twas him wrote that grand boxing song, 'Rags and bones is all that's left of the man that struck O'Hara.' "

"A wonderful song, Darby! A ballad with a Pindaric ring, and I'm not surprised that Rosanna should be attracted to the man who wrote it."

"Aye, young man, and who, forbye, sings it with such a blas and scoops in the coppers from all the omadhauns listening with their mouths, as well as their ears, open. And 'tisn't only that, but I never seen a young tinsmith could turn his hand to so many things. He always makes a good penny also at fairs as a roulette man or a three-card-trick man, and him too hoarse with singing to keep it up all day. And let me tell you that's the only reason Rosanna prefers him to you. Now, you have a sort of a badly trained genius as a poet, but if you'd let me give you a few tips about the ways to make the sort of song that will get in the coppers—"

"Oh, Darby! I wish you would," cut in the poet, excitedly. "I'd do anything I could in return to—"

"Easy a minute, avic, easy a minute, and I'll give you a few tips, and, mebbe, after a bit you'll make songs will make Rosanna give up Dan Doogan for you. And, mind you, Rosanna is a girl with her head screwed on well, and when I told her, putting in a good word for you by the ways, that you had a little allowance, she said that Dan Doogan could make thirty bob a week against your quid, to say nothing of his being handy to turn to anything. But your only chance is to make songs that'll make small potatoes of Dan Doogan."

"Well, Darby, as you know, I came down here all the way from London to study Kiltartanese—to catch a glimpse of the Celtic twilight—to study the diction of Synge and the poetry of Yeats at their well-springs—"

"Yeats! Yeats!" broke in the tinker in sarcastic vein.

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“Oh, that’s the boyo that wrote about that old rock in Lough Gill called ‘Innisfree,’ and that let on he could catch a trout by baiting a hook with a berry. As I told you before, that song-book he wrote is the biggest cod of a song-book I ever seen. Now ’twas me wrote the song about Donnelly knocking the dirty snot off the Englishman, Cooper, at the Curragh of Kildare, in the year of the big hunger—the same year that Augustus Moore, the uncle of George Moore, the poet, broke his neck and him riding for the Grand National, and ’twas me too as I told you before, the first day I met you, ’twas me that wrote ‘The Noble Lyncheaun.’ And do you mind how I was singing a great song of my own making that day in Jimmy McGloin’s when the I.R.A. broke in on us and pulled the two of us? I had only started it when they leapt on us. ’Twas a song about my own great-grandfather, who was hanged forinst the public in Castlebar for sheep-stealing.”

“Oh, I remember, Darby, I remember. It had the *Stimmung* of a Greek ‘threnos.’ You know, Darby, like the Scholar Gipsy, I feel that I am ‘waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.’ I want to write ballads for the fairs and patterns and markets in Connacht, and——”

“Well, hold your whisht a minute, and I’ll give it. It’s to the air of ‘My Name is Patrick Sheehan,’ you know—the la—the la—the la—the la—the la—the la—the la.”

And, clearing his throat with a couple of wheezing coughs, he struck up in a strident, rasping blend of bass and baritone:

“My name is Darby Donnellan—a tinker is my trade,
And all my life the lonesome roads of Connacht safe I
strayed,
Until I came to Kiltimagh, and there a sheep I stole,
So on the gallows I must die, and God receive my soul.

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The trial 'twas in Castlebar, the year of the big frost,
And when the hand-picked jury sat I knew that I was
lost,
The foreman was a gombeen man who swore the tinkers
stole
His turf, his hens, his ducks and geese, his ass-cart and
his foal.

That dirty blackguard, Shemus Dhu, he swore away my
life,
And when I'm in my quicklime grave, he'll marry my
young wife.
But for the world I leave behind, I do not care a rap,
If my poor soul goes up to heaven by falling down the
trap.

When Shemus Dhu he kissed the book, then I gave up
all hope,
Already round my neck I felt the hangman's greasy rope.
The jury found me guilty; the judge to me did say:
'The tenth day of November, 'twill be your dying day.'

Ye tinkers all who stroll the roads, be warned by my
sad fate:
Stop stealing turf and hens and hay before it is too late.
And when you see me kick and choke as in the noose I
die,
Pray for the soul of Darby Donnellan, when in the grave
I lie."

Darby mopped his forehead with a quondam red
handkerchief, grimaced, and put his grimy fingers to
his Adam's-apple.

"There's six verses more, but I've such a drouth on
me that my throat is too parched to sing any more. Give
us a pull at that old bottle you have. Just a couple of
sups. Ay, the best verses are the last ones, where I sing
about the ways my great-grandfather kicked and went
turning round and round like a top, wriggling and

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swiggle at the butt of the rope, and him half an hour in his death-grips and his face as blue as a boozer's nose and his neck all swell like a bladder, and his eyes lepping out of his head like a frog's, and his tongue stuck out, and him frothing from the mouth, and the death-sweat running down his beard like rain running off the thatch of a house. Do you know what? There's no song my Rosaneen og likes as much as that song. Often it was I seen her and her leppin like a hen on a hot griddle with the delight of listening and me singing that song."

"Really, Darby? Well, I'm not surprised. It's a song that goes with a swing——"

"Ay, with a swing like my old great-grandfather himself swung." Darby guffawed appreciatively at his own crude pun. "'Twas a great hanging—the greatest crowd ever seen at a Castlebar hanging since 'Fighting Fitzgerald' gave a leap and broke the rope and had to be hung all over again. There was Irishmen there from the four winds of Erin, and Yanks and foreigners from all the strange lands beyond the seas. 'Twas the last hanging in Castlebar for sheep-stealing, but there was lots after that hung for patriotism fornint the public."

"That reminds me of something, Darby," said the poet excitedly. "Let me think a minute. Oh yes. Talking about sheep-stealing, there's a ballad by Housman in his *Shropshire Lad* which—oh! I don't recall the beginning just at the moment, but one stanza goes:

‘A careless shepherd once would keep
The flocks by moonlight there,
And high among the glimmering sheep
The dead man stood on air.’”

"Musha, now that's a song without any go in it—without any life at all. There's nothing exciting about a dead man hanging at the butt-end of a rope. It's while

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he's choking and going black and blue before he gets his death dancing and kicking——”

“Oh! what about this from Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*? broke in the poet. “Your use of the word 'dancing' brings it to my mind:

“'Tis sweet to dance to violins,
When all is bright and fair,
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is beautiful and rare.
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air.'”

“Now, that is what I call a choice and elegant song,” said the tinker. “You must lend me the loan of the song-book in which it is wrote. It minds me of that darling line, 'He kicked too, but that was all pride' in 'The night before Larry was stretched,' that Dean Swift wrote, although by the same token the Provost of Trinity College, a great friend of mine, says that 'twasn't him done it. But you must lend me the loan of that song-book.”

“Certainly, Darby, as soon as we get back to Boynmore. Oh! by the way, here's an extract from a song by Victor Hugo with the same 'dancing' motif:

‘J' le ferai danser une danse
Lironfa malurette,
Où il n'y a de plancher
Lironfa malure.'”

“Now, look here to me, young man. I'm a deep, smart man, but the sorra word I know of book Irish or Munster Irish—only Connacht Irish, which is the only Irish with the right blas. And you to sing a song the likes of that at a fair, you'd be destroyed with the drouth before you sold one sheet.”

“Oh, Darby, it's not Irish—it's French *argot*.”

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"Well, if that's French, it's small wonder the French was bet at Ballinamuck, even if they won the 'Races of Castlebar' itself. But, begob, what's wrong with the old ass to make him stand up stone stiff so sudden? He near thrown me out right into the ditch. Give him a taste of the stick. No use hitting him on the back. Give him a couple of clouts across the neck. Wallop him hard. No use talking soft to an ass or a woman. Triur gan riagal, ban, asal agus muile."¹

"I say, Darby, do you notice the way he is wagging his ears?"

"Oh, that's nothing. Myself I can flap my own ears. Though, now that I think of it, that ass always wags his ears that ways when there's peelers about. So, becripes, leather away at him. It's near dark now, and if the Tans or the I.R.A. gets a hold of us, it's all up with me. Don't you know both gangs of peelers has been looking for me all over the country, and has circulated the report about me having held up the mail-car? A meddling, interfering lot the I.R.A. police is, and as for the Tans——"

His words were cut short by a sudden outburst of braying by the ass—braying in long-drawn-out, see-saw cadences. An ass in a nearby field took up the refrain in a grating crescendo. Another ass, about a quarter of a mile off, followed suit. Ass calling unto ass.

The chorus of asinine melody was dying away in a staccato diminuendo, when two men suddenly stepped from the hedge on the right with drawn revolvers.

"Hands up!"

One of the men tapped the pockets of Darby and the poet, and felt them all over to make sure that they carried no weapons.

"Hop out of that cart—quick!" snapped a curt voice.

¹ Gaelic. "Three without rule—a woman, an ass and a mule."

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They did so in precipitate panic.

"Now lead the ass down the road about ten yards, and you'll see an open gateway. Get into the field as quick as you can, and crouch up close behind the hedge. Lie down flat and don't budge until I tell you. There's going to be a fight any minute between us and the Tans. They're on their way to make an official reprisal on Ballymore, and we're going to give them a little surprise. Hop it quick, I hear the purring of a car. That's right. In there with you at once. Now, flat on your faces. Bury your noses in the muck if you don't want your skulls blown off."

"But what about my ass?" said the poet panickily. "He'll be under fire."

"He'll have to take his chance. Pull him in alongside the ditch there. And—oh! 'Tis the Tans right enough. Whisht—will you? Lie down, and bad scran to you."

(2)

Every fibre of his body aquake with sheer fright, the poet buried his face in the sticky loam during the seemingly interminable engagement between the Volunteers and the Black-and-Tans. During the intermittent lulls in the firing his ears were assailed by the tinker's lurid profanities.

"May the devil in hell fly away this blessed night with every mother's son of them—Tans and Volunteers! And, judging by the firing, they must have near wiped each other out. Machine-guns, be the hokey! And bombs, too, becripes! Both sides is nothing only dirty burjoisy scuts, grinding the faces of the proletariat."

The inferno of rifle-fire, bombs and machine-guns drowned the tinker's running commentary on the fray.

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The battle waxed fiercer and fiercer for fully a quarter of an hour, and then died away after a series of intermittent, vicious bursts into a few straggling shots at ever-increasing intervals.

Then came a dead silence, punctuated by occasional groans, prayers and imprecations.

"It's all over. You two chaps get up," came a gruff voice alongside the poet.

The poet tottered to his feet.

"I'll have to blindfold you both."

"What the blazes do you mean?" snapped the tinker.
"Is it the ways——"

"I'm bringing you to the Commandant's dug-out. Orders is orders. Come on here, Patsy Moran. You blindfold the big chap. I'll see to the young fellow. Ay, that's it. Don't be afraid. We're not going to shoot you. As a matter of fact, anyway, we're running short of lead. Now take my arm, and step out smart."

For a good quarter of an hour captors and captives seemed to be walking in a circle among squelching bogs and rickety stone walls. At length they came to a halt.

"Now get down on your hands and knees and crawl straight ahead of you till we tell you to stop. That's right. Move on quicker. Now turn to your left. Don't stop. That's it. That's it. Whoa there. Now stand up."

Their joints aching, the poet and the tinker struggled to their feet. They were standing in a commodious dug-out, whose ceiling and floor were lined with planks. Seated at a table on which were two candles stuck in empty porter bottles, was a merry-looking young man in a trench coat.

"Sit down on that old box, boys. There's room for both of you on it," he said breezily. "Now, tell me, which of you owns the ass and cart?"

"I do," said the poet.

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"Would you sell me that ass?" went on the young fellow, wheedlingly. "I'd give you a good price."

"I'd—I'd rather not. You see, I've got sentimental reasons for wanting to keep him."

"And I've sentimental reasons for wishing to buy him. However, if you won't sell him, you won't, and that's that. Are you aware that were it not for your ass we would probably have been wiped out, and Ballymore would have been in ruins by now?"

"How's that? I don't quite follow."

"Well, it's this way. We were kept on the run for several days by superior forces of the Tans, and we had just spent three days and three nights without a wink of sleep when we settled down last night to trap the Tans who were on their way to sack Ballymore. Well, we were so exhausted that we fell into a sound sleep, from which we were roused by the braying of your ass. And we were aroused barely in time to grab our rifles. Your ass has saved our lives as well as the town of Ballymore."

"How interesting! How very interesting!" exclaimed the poet animatedly. "My donkey by his braying saved Ballymore, just as the sacred geese saved ancient Rome by their cackling."

"Oh yes, of course. My knowledge of Roman history is very hazy. To be sure. The Gauls were scaling the Capitol silently by night when the geese started to cackle and aroused Manlius. By the way, you're a bit of a scholar. What's your occupation, if it's not a rude question?"

"I'm a poet. My name is Basil Boyd-Brown."

The young man stared at him hard, his brows contracted. Then he scrutinised Darby very closely, and uttered a long low whistle.

"Oh yes! Now I know who you are. Were you not

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with Darby Donnellan, commonly known as Darby the Drouth, the day the Black-and-Tans raised the parish court at Boynmore?"

"Er—er—er—oh yes! I—I—I—"

"What are you stuttering about? Who's that man with you?"

"That's Darby the Drouth—I know him very well by sight," butted in a young Volunteer, pausing in his job of oiling a rifle.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Dead certain, sir. He was up before the parish court on the charge of robbing the Boynmore mail-car."

"I never robbed no mail-car," shouted Darby truculently. "I only expropriated postal orders from a mail-bag the property of the army of occupation."

"The Tans as well as us are looking for you," said the Volunteer. "And you're on—"

"That's enough from you, my lad," cut in the officer curtly. "Get on with your rifle-cleaning. As for you, Darby, we'll not go into this delicate international question as to whether you have been confiscating enemy property or robbing—"

"When Humbert landed at Killala," interrupted Darby in a challenging tone, "he enrolled a corps of tinkers to forage for him, and they used to work their way in the dead of the night into the English camp and steal the food from under their noses. You'll find it all wrote in Latin in the *Book of Kells* in Trinity College, Dublin, that my friend, the Provost, lent me the loan of. And they wouldn't carry no pike nor no gun, but they were handy with the ash-plant for cracking the skulls of the Sassenach. Well, amn't I just after doing the same sort of—"

"Oh, I see, Darby, I see," cut in the officer with a hearty laugh. "So that's your line of defence. Well, just

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put it forward when you're on trial, and see how it works. Personally, however, I'm not quite convinced of the analogy between you and Humbert's followers, and regret that I must send you under an escort to Boynmore. As for you, young man, you are free to go whenever you wish. But before you go I want to ask you again if there is any chance of you changing your mind about selling your donkey?"

"Not the faintest. I'm very sorry, but——"

"Oh, don't apologise," said the officer with a sigh. "But you must pardon my importunity. When I think that only for your donkey braying Ballymore might have gone up in flames like Cork, Balbriggan, Thurles, Knockcroghery—but what's the use? Well, my name is O'Connor—Seamus O'Connor—and if ever you get into a tight corner while you're in this district, and I can help you, you may depend on me. And now I'm sorry, but my men will have to blindfold you again while they escort you to the road. Unfortunately it's one of our regulations, and it does not at all imply that we don't trust you. Good-bye."

(3)

The poet sat on a little mound beneath one of the stunted hawthorn bushes that clustered around the peak of Knocknashee—the trysting-place he had arranged with Rosanna Donnellan.

And what an apt setting for their imminent fateful meeting—a meeting which was to decide the tenor of two lives! "The Hill of the Fairies!" The hill on whose slopes the "good people" had marshalled by moonlight, and, as impish whim or benevolent intent swayed them, discussed the pranks or favours they had in store for poor, stupid, doddering, earth-bound mortals.

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In the sweltering calm of a May noon the poet's inward ear could catch the faint elemental music to which the invisible hosts marched in rhythm along the heath-clad slope towards the tiny mound on which he was sitting—that little eminence from which the old people said that the fairy queen gave orders to her wee subjects to steal the butter from the churns of churlish farmers, to swap hideous dwarfs for beautiful babies, to place crocks of gold in the path of lucky wayfarers, to bring lovers together, to make knowledgeable men "simple," to filch the roses from the cheeks of girls who scoffed at fairy-lore, and to turn the cream sour in the tea of scolding wives and crotchety old curmudgeons.

And to this knoll—the fairy queen's throne since time immemorial—his poetic whim had impelled him to lead Rosanna Donnellan and whisper in her ear the love that pulsated through every fibre of his being—that is, if she put in an appearance at all. If? If? If? The mere thought that she might ignore his letter made a cold perspiration break out on his forehead. And yet he felt that it was impossible that she could resist the appeal of the poem he had enclosed in the letter. All the poetry in his being had welled up and poured itself forth in those burning verses. Yes, she would appear at any moment, wearing the bunch of wild violets he had begged her to pin on her bosom, just to let him know as soon as she hove in sight that his ardent love was requited.

He leant forward and scanned the bohreen leading eastward, to see if there was any sign of her coming. It seemed to him that the dwarf hawthorn bending landward from the impact of the Atlantic blasts, and the snowy canaban with its gaunt ebon stalks aslant, were also craning their heads forward in sympathy with his hungry quest.

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The bush which formed a canopy over his head was heavy with bloom, and the ground beneath him was carpeted with the snow of tiny white petals, ever dropping silently through the drowsy air. The blended scent of hawthorn, heather, furze and honeysuckle pervaded the atmosphere—the incense which the May noon was exhaling to greet his nomad bride-to-be.

A flash of red at the foot of the bohreen! The poet's heart leaped to his mouth. Yes—it was Rosanna, barefooted, bareheaded, her plaid shawl askew with elegant nonchalance on her delicately rounded shoulders, her short red petticoat swirling around her bare knees.

The poet literally floated on air down the bohreen to meet her. As they came face to face half-way up the slope he saw that she was wearing the bunch of wild violets. Humbly grateful for this beautiful pledge of her love, he seized her proffered hand, a hand shapely and small, but calloused and red from work, and, bending down, kissed it fervently.

At length he ventured to look into her eyes—dark liquid eyes suffused with a tenderness he had never seen before in them. Urged by an irresistible *élan*, he kissed her passionately again and again. Gently but firmly disentangling herself from his frenzied embrace, she stepped back a few paces, her dusky cheeks aglow, a blended expression of ardour, triumph and confusion in her eyes.

Intoxicated with rapture, the poet bounded to her side again, and, taking her arm, gently led her up the bohreen towards the little knoll at the peak of Knocknashee.

“Here we are, Rosanna. Sit here on the fairy queen's throne and——”

“Is it me sit on that cnucean,” cut in Rosanna with a jarring guffaw, “and be all stung by pismires?”

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"Oh," said the poet, dejectedly, as he saw his fairy castle demolished by this anticlimax.

"Musha, acushla, asthore, machree," cooed Rosanna softly, as she threw her arms round his neck, "what's on you, with your lip dropping like a foal would have lost its mother? Come and let us sit down here in the hollow. Sure, isn't it lepping with the delight you ought to be? I'd sooner marry you, asthoreen, than any man in the County Mayo, and aren't you happy to hear that?"

"Happy, my darling, is it?" said the poet, the magic of her caress raising his soul from the abyss into which it had momentarily slumped. "Happy, did you say?"

"Aye, asthoreen, happy with your own Rosaneen—are you?" And, bending towards him, she kissed him.

"Happy, is it, Rosanna?" answered the poet. "Happy? Why, I'm wild with delight. And tell me, darling, what was it that made you give up Dan Doogan for me? Was it my poem?"

"Your what, agrah? I don't know what you're——"

"Oh, darling, the poem I enclosed in my letter. You read it, didn't you?"

"Oh! the old song, is it? 'Deed then, I didn't, because I couldn't read it."

"But, Rosanna, how—what—why couldn't you read it? Was it illegible?"

"Well, I didn't read it because I didn't learn to read nor write yet. Don't you know that them that strolls the roads for a living, sleeping one night mebbe in a houseen, and the next in an old tent in a ditch, and the next in a caravan mebbe, and streeling and straggling from town to town, they don't go to no school? But me ma brought the letter and the old song to Commandant McGrail of the I.R.A., and Commandant O'Connor was there too, and Judge O'Grady, the Yank from New

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York. And do you know what? The old song must have been a grand comic, because me ma says that the three of them went into fits of laughing. And they were near bursting when I came along too. What was the old song about, anyways?"

"It was—it was—it was about you, Rosanna."

"About me—is it?" snapped Rosanna, knitting her brows, her lips tightening. "And what do you mean by making a show of me, to have all the penny poets at fairs and patterns taking a rise out of me?"

"But, Rosanna, darling," pleaded the poet, "it wasn't a comic song—it was a paean to your beauty and—"

"Well, anyways, them lads put a funny meaning in it," butted in Rosanna, stamping her foot petulantly on the heath, "and that's all I know, bad scran to them. I only heard a couple of lines of it, and it was such a cod of an old song that I told Commandant McGrail to hold his dirty whisht when he wanted to sing more of it. The ways they all went yelling that old song, you'd think they had nothing else to bother them, and that there wasn't any Tans at all left on the roads waiting to be killed."

"So, Rosanna," said the poet, crestfallen, "you prefer Dan Doogan's songs to mine, do you?"

"Well, when you can make a song with a go in it like 'Rags and bones is all that's left of the man that struck O'Hara,' I'll say you're as great a poet as Dan Doogan—the Lord have mercy on his soul!"

"Why do you say 'the Lord have mercy on his soul,' Rosanna?"

"Because he's dead and buried."

"Dead and buried, Rosanna? Dan Doogan—Dan—"

"Dead and buried, asthore, he is. To put on the uniform of a Tan who was killed in the battle of Bally-

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more he done, and he took the revolver off the corpse too, and for a couple of nights he made a good penny lepping out of the whins when he seen anybody passing was likely to have a couple of coppers on him itself. Well, both the Tans and the I.R.A. was looking for him, and if he didn't lep one night right into the arms of Bos-gan-soggarth, the biggest blackguard of a Tan ever came from England. Well, they were just going to throw him into the lorry when me bold Dan darted into the whins, and Bos-gan-soggarth after him. Away went Dan over hedges and ditches until at last he got stuck as he was trying to wriggle himself between the bars of a ten-barred gate. He got his head and shoulders through easy enough, but his arse was too big to get it through the barred gate. The devil an inch he could move. You never seen a fatter tinker anyways. Well, Bos-gan-soggarth caught up on him, and if he didn't give poor Daneen the contents of his revolver in the seat of the pants while the poor lad was wriggling and trying to get through, five bullets one after another, and didn't one of them go right through him and out at the back of his poll. But he got a grand wake anyways, because there was a lot of Doogans that night among a field of tinkers come up for the pattern at Murrisk. I was at it myself, and poor Daneen made a lovely corpse. Half a barrel of porter and thirty clay pipes and a pound of tobacco they had for the wake. And there was lashin's and leavin's, and the devil a Christian at the wake that wasn't puking all over the place—they was that full."

"Oh, Rosanna!" protested the poet, squirming visibly.

"Mebbe you don't believe me. Well, I can tell you the Doogans always done their corpses very flohool. Nothing of the naygur or the gripe about them."

"I presume," said the poet caustically, "that it was

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because Dan Doogan was shot that you decided to marry me?"

"Well, asthoreen, that was one reason," replied Rosanna, either ignoring or too obtuse to sense his sarcasm. "Me old da told us that you had a pension of a pound a week, and even if you are no good itself at writing songs or singing them, you could learn to solder the rim of a can, and to gather periwinkles and cranuc and bornucs on the shore, and to steal a breshul of turf at night or milk a cow or cut the feeding for the ass in the meadow of some gripe of a farmer or—but, would you mind telling me what you are laughing at? Take that streesh now off your face, or—mebbe it's the ways you're trying to back out of it now, after the way in which the two commandants and the Yankee judge seen the letter in which you asked me to marry you, and if you dare to try to back out of it now you'll get a crack across the dirty snotty nose from me, and me old da will split your skull with the soldering iron, and you'll be read off the altar by Father Tom, and big fines will be put on you in the courts for breach of promise."

"Oh! Rosanna, darling, I—I—I—oh, don't—oh, this is terrible—Rosanna, please listen to me."

"Trying to take a rise out of me you are, mebbe," sobbed Rosanna, "and me ma after going down to Father Tom, and him after promising to marry us any minute."

"Hush, darling; hush, Rosanna," said the poet, hugging her to his heart, and fondling her hair. "I'm too fond of you to want to back out of marrying you. I'm crazy with delight at the prospect. You must forgive me, of course, for feeling just a little piqued over the—well—the lack of appreciation of my poetry shown by you and—and those Philistine I.R.A. officers. So that's that,

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and I had put my whole soul into that poem, Rosanna, darling, and all just to be jeered at by those soulless gunmen. However, let us forget it. And now, about our marriage. It seems your good mother has arranged everything with Father Tom. Dry your tears, darling, and tell me."

Rosanna nestled up to him, and dabbed her eyes with the corner of her shawl. Then she glanced at him with nervous furtiveness as though not yet quite sure of her grip on him.

"Aye, asthore, and Father Tom said that you'd have to turn."

"Have to turn, Rosanna? What do you mean?"

"Have to turn a Catholic, agraah."

"Oh," laughed the poet, "oh, no trouble about that."

"Father Tom says that the sooner you turn the quicker we can get married. So I was thinking that mebbe if we put the ass to the cart now and drove to the presbytery to see Father Tom——"

"Right-ho, Rosanna, and—oh, by the way—you said that there was another reason, apart from the death of Dan Doogan, that made you decide to marry me. Now, what was the other reason, Rosanna darling?"

An impish glint came into Rosanna's eye as she extracted an envelope from her bosom.

"The other reason, asthore? Here 'tis."

The poet tore the envelope open. The letter ran thus:

SOMEWHERE IN MAYO

DEAR MR. BOYD-BROWN,

I am asking Rosanna Donnellan, your betrothed bride, as I gather from a letter she has given me to read, to convey to you news which will, doubtless, be pleasing to you.

At our last meeting I expressed to you my gratitude

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for the services your ass rendered to the I.R.A. and to the town of Ballymore by his very opportune braying. I tried to induce you to sell me the ass as a mascot for our battalion, but in vain. Well, now, with a view to commemorating the great services rendered to us by your ass, a few friends have co-operated with me in raising a small fund to provide a pension for his life-time for the animal. Commandant McGrail, Supreme Court Judge O'Grady, of New York, and myself are on the committee.

At our last meeting you drew my attention to the analogy between the service rendered to ancient Rome by the cackling of the Capitol geese and that rendered to Ireland by the braying of your ass.

Well, another analogy with an incident in Roman history offers itself in a proviso we are laying down with regard to the drawing of the pension for your ass. You may recollect that when a particularly rotten poet presented Sulla with an ode which he had written in his honour, the great dictator ordered a sum of money to be handed to him, on condition that he promised to write no more poetry. Now, we insist on a similar condition. The very first poem you publish, whether for newspaper, periodical, or broadsheet, will mean the end of the pension to your ass.

Ad multos annos to Rosanna, yourself, and your ass.—Mise le meas.

SEUMAS O'CONNAIRE,
COMMANDANT, I.R.A.

The letter fluttered to the earth from his limp hand, and was whirled along the heathery slope of Knocknashee by a faint breeze which had just arisen. Leaping lithely to her feet, Rosanna bounded in pursuit of the letter, as it flitted before her like a mammoth butterfly.

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At length she overtook it, and, her dusky cheeks aglow with the exercise, she tripped gaily back to the poet, who greeted her with a wry, enigmatical smile.

“Rosanna, was it before or after you heard of the pension for the ass that you made up your mind to marry me?”

Wide-mouthed and wide-eyed, Rosanna stared at him for a minute. “‘Twas after I heard it, alannah, machree. When I heard you were going to get an extra pound a week along with the one you have already, I knew you were a grand match. Oh, begob, isn’t it great?”

She clapped her hands with glee and started to dance frenziedly around the poet in ever-widening circles, until she had completed half a dozen revolutions. Then the circles narrowed again, each one bringing her nearer to the poet. As she danced she chanted a weird challenging song, the words of which, strain his ears as he would, eluded him. To him this chant of the nomad Mayo girl was a spell-binding incantation like the song of the sirens of Greek mythology or the German Lorelei. Yes, the melody was mesmerising him, bringing him more and more under the sway of the Connaught tinker lass. By some inexplicable instinct he strove to struggle against her domination, but even as he strove he knew the effort was unavailing. He felt he was her serf for evermore—lured onward by her magic chant, mayhap to his ruin, as the Rhineland fisherman was drawn towards the fatal reefs on which the Lorelei sat, combing her golden hair :

Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
Die Lorelei gethan.

And as the magic melody of her weird song intoxicated his brain more and more, he felt that, spiritually, he

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was already wed to this Celtic gipsy, that he had gone irrevocably native. Well, what about it? What if he never wrote another poem in his life, in obedience to the interdict of those soulless gunmen! Wedded to her, he would live poetry. Their life would be one long lyric of love.

He watched her feet in their rhythmic gyrations, improvising a medley, so it seemed, of all the metrical systems of Horace's odes. But the leitmotiv of melody and movement was Pindaric.

There was an undercurrent of haunting melancholy about it, as there is about everything Celtic, but ever and anon an exuberant and triumphant note would burst forth in a dominating crescendo.

Then all of a sudden the parallel between his endeavour to catch the elusive lilt and tempo of the girl's wild song and dance and Wordsworth's dilemma as he listened to the strains of the solitary Highland lass, impressed him so vividly that, just as Rosanna, once more at the end of a series of decreasing revolutions, gyrated closer to him, his *monologue intérieur* became vocal, and he apostrophised the slopes of Knocknashee:

"Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."

"What's on you, asthore!" said Rosanna, mouth agape, suddenly stopping her improvised dance.

"What is that song you are singing, my darling?" The poet spoke in a dreamy, languid voice, as if he were under a trance.

Rosanna sighed as she fixed tear-dimmed eyes on the poet.

"'Twas the last song poor Danceen ever wrote," she

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said, her voice choked with tears. "And he sold over a hundred sheets only the other day after him singing it at Westport fair. It begins, 'Let ye all be there when I flatten Paddy Flynn,' and it goes to the air of 'The night before Larry was stretched.'"

"You seem heart-broken over the death of Mr. Doogan," said the poet with some pique.

"Well, he was a grand man at his trade—not like my old da, who was always spoiling tin. And then as a poet and a sweet singer there was no comparing my old da with him—'twas like comparing a stare¹ with a blackbird or a corncrake with a canary. But wasn't it a dirty death for a sweet singer, the likes of him to get at the hands of a rotten English Tan, the likes of Bos-gan-soggarth?"

¹ Stare: a starling.

CHAPTER IX

THE TINKERS' SOVIET

A year later

(1)

SWAYING to the gentle May zephyr, the hawthorn bush on the peak of Knocknashee was shedding a shower of snowy petals on the mossy ground on which Rosanna squatted, dandling her fretful three-months-old infant in her arms.

"Alannah, machree, asthoreen," she crooned softly. "Cutting his front teeth he is, and that is why he is so uneasy in himself."

"He isn't like his father, Rosanna—is he?" I ventured, just by way of saying something.

"No, I think he's like me old da," she replied sullenly. "As for his father I disremember entirely what he is like. He only stayed with me for the one night when he came to steal the ass a week ago. And before that he only stayed with me for one night after our marriage just a year ago. How I mind that it was just a year ago since our marriage was that it was under this very tree he asked me to marry him, and the ground was white with them hawthorn flowers then too, just like now. I mind him blathering about them being like a carpet of summer snow. I might have known he was a bit soft in the head, him to talk like that. Ay, and then only to stay with me the one night, and then another night a year after."

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She sighed.

"I don't know what was on me to marry a poet," she went on, "and him no good even at his trade as a poet."

"You seem to have a partiality for poets, Rosanna," I bantered. "Your previous fiancé was also a poet, isn't that so?"

Tears filled Rosanna's eyes.

"Ah, but he was a real poet, was poor Daneen—the Lord have mercy on his soul! And may the rotten Tan, Bos-gan-soggarth that shot him, roast on the flaming hobs of hell for ever! The dirty coward to shoot poor Daneen through the seat of the pants and him wriggling through the bars of a gate!"

"I remember hearing Dan Doogan singing a song at Westport fair," I remarked by way of deflecting the emotional trend of Rosanna's thoughts. "It was in praise of some hefty wench with a powerful fist. How's this it went——"

"I know it," cut in Rosanna eagerly. "I know it. 'Twas a grand song he made about me. I disremember it all but a couple of lines:

'And her to give you a clout of her fist,
Sure you'd think 'twas a kick from a horse you got.
She's my own Rosanna Donnellan, sure she'd flatten
any man.' "

She stamped one shapely bare foot on the spongy, petal-covered turf.

"And to think that instead of marrying the pride of the Mayo ballad-writers and singers I'm tied to that pookah's miserom!"¹

"Well, after all, you must have cared a little for him to marry him, Rosanna," I protested.

"The sorra bit of me did, to tell you the truth,

¹ Toadstool.

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asthore, but I thought 'twas a grand match for a tramp-tinker's daughter to get a man had a pound a week private income, and another pound the pension he got for the ass."

"Ah, I heard something about the pension for the ass, but I thought it was just a joke of the village lads."

"Well, the devil a lie in it, asthore. Some of the officers of the I.R.A. and an American judge gave the ass a pension for life for him to have brayed so loud one night he woke up the lads and them fast asleep. They woke just in time to get hold of their rifles and beat off the Tans. Only for the ass braying they were all wiped out by the Tans. Basil—that's the blackguard I'm married to—had just bought the ass and cart from me da at the time."

"And so, Rosanna, if the ass didn't get the pension, you wouldn't have married Mr. Basil Boyd-Brown—is that so?"

"Arrah, the devil a marry, asthore. And sure, damn little I seen of him since we were married itself, him stravagin' round the country with me old da, looking for pookahs and leprechauns and cluricauns and banshees and drinking poteen with all the dirty drunken tramp-tinkers the like of Lonesome Pint or Steal the Hen. He says he is making a grand big printed book all about tinkers, but 'tis my belief he knows as much about printing as he does about poetry. He never came near me all the time I was carrying little Darbeen here, and he wouldn't have turned up a week ago with my dirty old drunken da—the last time I seen him—only he wanted to steal the ass which I had always kept, him having the pension rights."

"Who had the pension rights, Rosanna?"

"The ass, to be sure. I always got the pension regular from the Commandant, and he said if he got his hand

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on Basil, he'd flatten him out for a wife-deserter."

"Well, why did your husband steal the ass, Rosanna? He couldn't get the pension, it seems—he had forfeited it. Isn't that so?"

"He stole the ass to bring him off to the wars."

"The wars, Rosanna? What wars?"

"The wars between the Boynmore Soviet and the Free State, agrah. Didn't you hear tell of it?"

"Oh, I heard that your father and some other tinsmiths had seized the bank and robbed it and that they had commandeered all the food in Jimmy P.'s and other shops, and that they are holding the mountains commanding the pass of Bealnamuc leading into Boynmore. But the Free State troops will soon make short work of them."

"If they did itself, asthore, 'tis me would be glad, but I'm afeared that they'll never root them out of the mountains. Didn't I hear me da and Basil and Lonesome Pint planning how they could never be drove out of Rathnacopall—a big fort of clay with high walls is there since the time of Finmacool? I mind them argyfying about it and them drying half-crowns before the fire."

"Drying half-crowns?"

"Aye, drying half-crowns made of lead that me da had cast in the mould. You know it takes a long time and a deal of care to dry a lead half-crown so that it won't double up in two and a man testing it. What are you laughing at? Mebbe you don't believe me?"

"Oh, I believe you, of course, Rosanna," I replied, making a desperate effort to look serious. "And how long is it since they were drying these half-crowns?"

"It was the first and last night for near a year that my man had come home. And the devil a home I would have only my poor mother always manages to keep the

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roof over me. She has a great gradh for you always, she says, because she nursed you and you a gosoor. She saved you once from being ate up alive by a pig—didn't she?"

"She did indeed, Rosanna. I owe a great debt to your mother!"

"It must be terrible to be ate by a pig. I suppose now you disremember it and you only a little gosooreen then."

"I have no recollection of the incident, Rosanna. But let us talk about your husband. You say he never turned up for nearly a year until a week ago."

"Aye, and he was gone in the morning before I awoke, and the ass along with him. My poor little assaleen that was my support for myself and Darbeen. And, saving your presence, agrah, I've a queer feeling over me. 'Tis freckened I am that I'm for another, and God knows 'tis hard enough to rear one itself. Mavrone! Mavrone! I wish to God now he hadn't stayed the night."

Tears welled in her eyes. I felt a lump in my throat. There was an awkward silence which was abruptly broken by the deafening reverberation of a volley of rifle-shots in the narrow gap of Bealnamuc. Smoke billowed up above the slopes of the defile, and then there were sporadic shots from the mountain peaks on either side of the valley.

"They're at it hammer and tongs!" I said. Somehow I welcomed the rifle duel which had put an abrupt period to an awkward emotional crisis.

"Oh, my poor little assaleen, the innocent creature!" wailed Rosanna as she hugged her baby to her bosom. "'Tis murdered in the wars he'll be."

A very thin streak of romantic chivalry, latent in my make-up, combined with a sense of what I owed to Rosanna's mother, impelled me to a heroic resolve. I

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was momentarily—very momentarily—infamed by that spirit of self-sacrifice that made the Johnny in ancient Rome leap into the yawning chasm in the Forum.

“I’ll save your donkey, Rosanna,” I said with a knightly gesture.

(2)

I crawled along on all-fours among the furze-bushes and knee-deep heather that clothed the slopes of Slievnacopall, taking care to keep under cover all the time. If I were seen either by the Free State troops, who had taken cover behind the boulders at the mouth of the narrow defile of Bealnamuc beneath me, or by the tinkers on either of the lofty peaks that dominated it, I was as good as dead. As it was, the intermittent random bullets from either side that waisted among the furze or plopped with a dull thud against the stunted hawthorn trees or ricocheted against the granite crags, sent my heart jumping to my mouth every now and then. How often during that painful ascent did I bitterly regret the romantic gallantry which induced me to risk my skin for the whim of a tinker’s daughter! However, I was determined to fulfil my promise to Rosanna. After all, would I be there on that hillside at all to be shot at, were it not for the timely intervention of Rosanna’s mother long ago when I was at the mercy of a pig? To fire my morale I concentrated my thoughts on the injustice of the enforced conscription of Rosanna’s donkey in the ranks of the Tinkers’ Soviet army.

I saw an analogy between the injustice done to that poor dumb brute and Lloyd George’s abortive effort in the summer of 1917 to dragoon the Irish people into the British army. And I worked myself up to such a

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passion of indignation at the parallel between the press-ganging of my people and that of the poor donkey that, bleeding hands and knees notwithstanding, I made the pace quicker than I reckoned.

The hum of voices a short distance ahead of me diverted me suddenly from my intensive mental propaganda as to the righteousness of the cause I had espoused. Crouching closer to the ground, I crawled along more cautiously for another hundred yards, when, peering through a rift in the maze of furze, I saw, squatting in the deep crater of the rath at the crest of the mountain, about a score of dirty-looking, ragged blackguards encircling Darby and the poet. At various points along the steep rampart of the rath men crouched over rifles whose muzzles pointed towards the gap of Baelnamuc and Boynmore. I noticed that a red flag was flying from the chimney-pot of Boynmore townhall. A confused babel of raucous conversation greeted my ears. I crawled onward, onward, until I was well within earshot.

"Where the men of the Nenagh Creameries led, Boynmore follows," came Darby's truculent voice.

"Quite so," said the poet. "But surely the Nenagh Bolsheviks never contemplated abolishing the police altogether. Even Karl Marx and Lenin never visualised a state without a police force."

"Arrah, stop your blather about Marx and Lenin," snarled Darby. "I won't have no peelers, neither R.I.C., nor Black-and-Tans, nor Civic Guards, in Boynmore. All peelers is good for is for interfering with the proletariat when they are expropriating the instruments and means of production from the burjoisy. And long before Marx or Lenin was born, the tinsmiths of Mayo followed the principle of sequestering the property of the bloated burjoisy. Wasn't my own great-grandfather

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hung forinst the public in Castlebar, and him kicking like a mad dog for expropriating a sheep at Kiltimagh from a dirty miserly land-grabbing farmer? You mind the grand song I made about it, Homer? And when I was took a prisoner of war by the brutal English soldiers from Liberty Hall to Trinity College, didn't Professor Mahaffy own up 'twas the finest song wrote since 'The night before Larry was stretched?' And didn't he say that only I was going to be shot for looting 'tis how he'd give me all the letters of the College after my name? And by the same token, look here to me you, Lonesome Pint, don't you dare go singing my song again the same as you done at the pattern at the Reek,¹ because if you do——"

"'Twas to buy a sheet of the ballad at Clashmore fair I done from your Rosaneen," cut in a sullen voice, "and I thought I had right, me having paid for it——"

"Well, you hadn't no right. 'Twas a breach of promise—no, 'twas——"

"A breach of copyright," piped the poet helpfully.

"A breach of copyright—common low-down robbery, in other words," went on Darby. "'Tis robbery to take anything from the proletariat, but 'tis only sequestering or expropriating or confiscating to deprive the burjoisy of the instruments and means of production. And them was the principles I always followed. I expropriated the shirt that's on my back this minute from Father Tom O'Hara's clothes-line. The clergy is burjoisy as well as the publicans and the landlords. And did I ever burn a sod of turf or give the ass a feed of grass that wasn't confiscated from the burjoisy?"

"All very fine to be talking about your principles," put in the poet gloomily, "but can you enforce them against the Free State artillery?"

¹ Reek: local name for Croagh Patrick.

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"Free State artillery," guffawed Darby. "The Free State won't send no artillery against us. A hell of a lot a whole battery, or a brigade of artillery itself could do against us. 'Tis how they would have to level the walls of Rathnacopall first, and after that blow all Slievenacopall to smithcreens to get at us, and while they would be striving to do it, we could pick off their men from their guns as easy as you'd pick off lice off your shirt. And if we are bet itself, we could only be hung, and was there ever a good Irishman was afraid to choke and swiggle in his death-grips at the butt of a rope? 'High upon the gallows-tree,' says I, and——"

"Darby—Darby Donnellan," gasped one of the look-out men on the parapet of the rath, as he pointed excitedly seaward.

"President Donnellan from you, Hayporth o' Tay," barked Darby, "and, barring I change my mind, I'll have you shot unanimously at dawn for high treason and blasphemy against the supreme head of the Boynmore Soviet. Now keep your block down, or the Staters will knock it off for you. What's on you, anyway? I'll Darby Donnellan you!"

"Look, Mr. President—your worship—your honour," screamed the terrified sentry. "Look—there's the bloody *O'Murachoo* coming up the bay, your reverence. We'd better be making our souls, for 'tis stiff dead——"

"Shut your gob," snapped Darby, as he peered cautiously over the rampart of the rath. Then suddenly his jaw sagged and his eyes goggled. "'Tis the *O'Murachoo* right enough. I wonder is she going to let fly at us, or mebbe she is only in the bay trying to catch the Scotch trawlers. Anyways, we'll wait and see."

"The *O'Murachoo*—I think I've heard that name before," said the poet.

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"To be sure you have," replied Darby. "She was the *Helga*—"

"Oh yes," cut in the poet, "and Lloyd George made a present of her to the Free State navy."

"She is the whole bloody Free State navy," said Darby contemptuously. "They say it's unlucky to change the name of a ship. And, beripes, she has been an unlucky ship for me anyways. When the Citizen Army evacuated Liberty Hall in Dublin early in Easter Week, I moved into it with the spoils of war which I had collected. Some other tinsmiths who had come up from Connaught for the Fairyhouse Races were with me, and we had only settled in nicely when the bloody ship in front of us—she was the *Helga* then—popped a half-dozen shells on top of us. One of the shells landed right into the cellar, and blew me clean out of my standing, and 'tis only through the grace of God that I'm alive to tell the tale. I was buried in rubbish and rafters and slates and bricks, and when I was dug out by the brutal English soldiers and brought to Trinity College as a prisoner of war, I lost for good and all the spoils of war I had deposited in Liberty Hall—two pianos, half a dozen sides of bacon, a few fur coats for Rosaneen and the missus, a gross of ladies' shoes, a firkin of butter, a case of whiskey and five jars of bull's-eyes. Whatever wasn't buried in the rubbish was taken by the thieving English soldiers. And so only for the bloody old *Helga* which Mick Collins accepted afterwards as a present from the British Government, I wouldn't have lost my little property which I expropriated from the burjoisy of Dublin. And there she is now reeling in the swell like a paralatic drunkard—the *O'Murachoo*, moryah—the whole bloody Free State navy presented by the thieving English to Mick. The last time I seen the *O'Murachoo*—she was then the *Helga*—was when

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she was crossing the harbour-bar of the Liffey with her arse to Dublin after Easter Week, taking away Birrell, that Joker of the Liberal pack of cards, for good and all to his own country. That was before the English burjoisy gave her to Mick to grind the faces of the Irish proletariat."

"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," droned the poet.

"It's bad manners to talk dead languages to living people," remarked Darby coldly. "Give me a skelp out of that hip-flask of yours, and keep your bloody mouth shut."

"Didn't the *Helga*, if my memory serves me right, fire a shell into the city from Dublin Bay some months after the rebellion under cover of dark?" went on the poet, as he passed the bottle to his father-in-law. "I'm certain I read about it in the English papers."

"You've got the whole story upside-down," snapped the tinker, after half emptying the flask down his throat.

"Oh, but I distinctly recollect the details now," persisted the poet. "There was an indignation meeting held the following day in Dublin about the mysterious shot, and there was a question raised in the House of Commons by John Dillon, and the First Lord of the Admiralty investigated the matter."

"Ay, and it came out that it wasn't the *Helga* nor any of the British warships that fired the shell," roared Darby truculently, after he had emptied the rest of the flask. "'Twas a tramp steamer that done it shortly after leaving the Dublin docks, and if you want to know who fired the shell, 'twas me done it. You'll see it all printed in the *Book of Kells* in Trinity College, where they put in all about the wars."

"You fired the shot! You—you?"

"Yes, 'twas me done it, and for very good reasons too.

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I had shipped as an O.S. on a tramp steamer, and just a couple of hours before my ship was due to sail I was thrown out of a public-house on the Dublin quays by a flat-footed Tipperary counter-hopper—flung out and left rolling in the mud. Only I was blind paralatic drunk he wouldn't have done it on me. I didn't come to until the steamer was crossing the Dublin bar at the mouth of the Liffey, and then I was that wild at the thought of the insult done on me by that Tipperary loodhraamaun raised on yellow meal that I stripped the tarpaulin off the aft gun—you remember that merchantmen carried guns during the war—and I let fly in the direction of the public-house. I missed it by a short neck, and the shell landed in the Phoenix Park and very nearly done for a bunch of English Tommies. But—— Eh? What's up now?"

He pointed towards the gunboat on which his eyes had been fixed all the time while he was speaking. She had hitherto been speeding up the bay prow on, but now she suddenly swerved round broadside, and came to a standstill with her guns directly pointed against the upper slopes of Slievenacopall.

"Looks as if she was thinking of shifting the mountain," said Darby lightly, but there was a tinge of uneasiness behind his daredevil bravado. He paled slightly as a salvo of rifle shots came from the dark ravine of Bealnamuc, followed by a burst of machine-gun fire.

"Don't fire, boys," he shouted in a panic. "Don't heed the Staters. They want us to give away the position to the gunners on the *O'Murachoo* by drawing our fire. Keep yer heads ducked and divide into three halves and scatter together. 'Tis likely they may try to rush us."

Another volley—and yet another from Bealnamuc—elicited no reply from the tinkers.

And then suddenly I saw the donkey for which I had

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been looking emerging from a clump of furze and ambling nonchalantly up the grassy slope of the rath. Simultaneously he let back his ears, and emitted a resonant long-drawn-out, ear-splitting bray.

"Pull the blasted brute down out of that or he'll give us away," yelled Darby frantically. "Look alive there, Homer. Pull him back, but keep your head ducked. Don't grab at his tail! That's no use! Catch him by the mane. The devil has took him to set him braying like that!"

By this time, however, the donkey's head and forelegs were clearly silhouetted against the skyline, and a shower of bullets waisted close to his head. The poet made a frantic leap at the braying brute's tail, and tried to drag him backwards into the crater. The donkey shied and landed the poet a kick in the jaw, which hurled him roaring with pain into a clump of furze.

Just then I glanced seawards. There was a flash—a puff of smoke—and a loud booming report from the *O'Murachoo*, followed by a deafening explosion, immediately after which I was catapulted through the air against Darby Donnellan's stomach, ricocheting therefrom forthwith, and catching the yelling poet with my right heel under the chin as I hurtled past him and landed in a mound of churned-up earth.

"The bloody Free State navy has my belly ripped open with a cannon-ball," gasped Darby with an air of despairing finality. "I'm done for. Me guts is blown clean out of me."

I staggered to my feet, and saw all the other tinkers lying in the well of the rath, some dead, some dazed, some wriggling and screaming among the churned-up earth, while the poet, nursing his wounded jaw and emitting intermittent yells, was shinning it for dear life along the hillside. And just then there was another dull

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boom, followed by a rending crash. As I was hurled backwards among a heap of uprooted furze and hawthorn trees I saw the donkey whirling skywards in a shower of earth.

Then darkness descended on me.

(3)

When I recovered consciousness, I was lying in bed in a low-ceilinged room with Bridget Donnellan, my old nurse, leaning over me.

"You're grand now, asthore," she said soothingly, as she laid her withered hand on my forehead. "Healthy and cool your head is."

"What happened?" I asked hazily. "Who brought me here? The ass—what—"

"Whisht, asthore. Don't talk and excite yourself, and I'll tell you everything. Anyways the war is over, and nearly all the tinkers in County Mayo and Galway is killed. But wait till you get a suppeen of whiskey first. You're in my houseen, as you can see."

She went to the door, and half opening it, called out:

"Rosaneen agraah, did you get the sup of whiskey?"

"Here it is, ma," replied Rosanna, bouncing briskly into the room, and handing her mother a bottle. "They had no John J. ten-year-old—so I got Power's. Oh, begob, isn't it grand he looks? You haven't no pain, asthore, have you?"

"The ass, Rosanna—what happened the ass?" I asked eagerly.

Rosanna choked back a sob, and held the corner of her apron to her eye.

"The ass was killed in the wars," she said brokenly. "He was blew up by a cannon-ball."

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She was so overcome that she burst into a torrent of tears, and hid her face in her apron.

"Don't talk to her, agrah," said old Bridget in a half whisper. "She is all through other over the poor assaleen.¹ Well, anyways, the pension that was for the ass is to go to Rosanna for life, because the commandant said that 'twas the second time that that same ass saved Ireland by his braying. Only for him, says the commandant, all Ireland would soon be a Bolshevik country like Russia, because the captain of the *O'Murachoo* would never be able to find out where Darby and the other blackguards were hid. But come now and take this drop of the hard stuff, or mebbe you'll be getting another weakness. Every sup of it, asthore. That's it. You'll be grand now."

"What happened to Darby and Rosanna's husband?" I enquired.

"The last seen of Darby was when he was took to the barracks in a lorry, him roaring that he was a martyr for the proletariat by dint of the Free State having ripped out his guts with a cannon-ball and threatening to take the law of them."

"Jimmy P. told me and me buying the naggin of whiskey that he wouldn't say that me old da wasn't hung this morning," said Rosanna, dabbing her eyes with the tail of her apron.

"They wouldn't hang him that soon," replied her mother after a moment's reflection.

"And your husband, Rosanna?" I queried.

"Him, is it?" retorted Rosanna caustically. "Galloping mad away as fast as he could from the wars he was when Patsy Mike's barrow-pig ran between his legs at the butt of Slievnacopall, near John Joe's public-house, and threw him on his back and broke his poll.

¹ Gaelic. "Little ass."

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The Staters is burying him to-day and all the tinkers in a big grave would hold Father Tom's turf-stack."

"But what about the funeral?" I asked.

"There won't be no funeral, agrah," replied Bridget grimly. "Rosaneen isn't going to no funeral for that wife-deserter and ass-stealer. Carrying a post-mortem child for him she is, the poor creature. Only 'twould be a sin to treat a beast like a Christian I'd sooner have a funeral and a wake for the poor little ass than for him. Wasn't poor little Rosanna the misfortunate girl to let him stay that night? Only for that she wouldn't be that way, and the ass would be alive, the creature."

(4)

Father Tom O'Hara took a pinch of snuff, blew his nose noisily with a turkey-red handkerchief, lounged leisurely against the ledge of his pulpit, and started his Sunday address to his parishioners in that measured staccato delivery which made him the theme of good-humoured banter among the other priests of the diocese.

"The collectors at the church doors for the coming month will be: For the front door, Thomaseen Mike O'Grady Mor and Paideen Tom O'Grady Beg. Gallery door, Meehaul Shawn O'Malley, Tom and Pat Kerrigan Shawn Mor.

"I would remind the kind people of the parish that the turf-cutting season has now started, and I want to have seventy carts of turf out on my turbarry and stacked in due course in the yard at the back of the presbytery. A committee will meet after mass in the sacristy and appoint relays of men who will take turns at the cutting, drying, footing, stacking and carting of the turf. And I want those who will be saving my turf to remember that I want hard black turf. There was a

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lot of sporchuc and scraws in the last season's turf—the sort of stuff that even Darby Donnellan wouldn't be bothered stealing.

“Various small sums of money and one purse containing a considerable sum were found lying about on various parts of the roads and in the town after the spring cattle-fair. These sums have been handed up to me, and if the owners will give me particulars as to the amounts they lost, they can have them back. In five cases the sums of money found were in public-houses. If the owners were so drunk that they don't remember losing the money, it will be transferred to the poor-box if not claimed within six months.

“And talking about the spring fair, the doctor tells me that he had to put stitches into forty heads that night. Now, dearly beloved brethren, this is heart-breaking news for the priest of a parish lying within the shadow of Croagh Patrick. It was excesses like these that brought the curse of prohibition on the United States of America, to prevent decent self-respecting Christians from taking drink in moderation just because there are a few beasts who wallow in it like swine at a trough. Our blessed Lord made wine at the marriage feast at Cana, and Saint Paul himself said that a little sup was good for anyone that isn't feeling too well.

“Tramp-tinkers tying their ass-carts to the church gates and letting their asses graze among the graves will have their animals and vehicles put in the pound in future. I have spoken to the sergeant about it.

“Dearly beloved brethren, thank God we have just seen the defeat of the dastardly effort on the part of a handful of unemployed and unemployable blackguards under the leadership of a gang of tramp-tinkers to convert our little towneen of Boynmore into another Russia. Luckily the Free State Government scattered the Mayo

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Communists with a couple of shells fired at them from the bay by the *O'Murachoo*. A pity that they didn't land one on Darby Donnellan, the generalissimo of the rebellion, and blow him to smithereens. Unfortunately this scion of a race of gallows-birds got away after being captured (he always does!) and has cleared the country or at least the parish of Boynmore for a bit. Well, thank God, although a lot of property was stolen and destroyed, nobody was killed barring a lot of tinkers and Darby Donnellan's son-in-law, the English poet. May the Lord have mercy on their souls! And I'm very glad to say that, barring the Englishman and Darby Donnellan, none of the tinkers were from this parish. They were all strangers—from Galway and Castlebar.

"Of course, Darby Donnellan was only trying to get the good people of Boynmore to accept the principle of wholesale robbery which exists in Russia, and which he always put into practice personally. No man's hens or ducks or geese or sheep or hay were safe when he or his crew were about. He hadn't respect even for the parish priest's shirt. More than once he raided my clothes-line.

"Dearly beloved brethren, a good many of you remember the occasion when Darby Donnellan's practical application of Bolshevik principles nearly sent Boynmore and all the people in it flying sky-high. One day during the war—I mean the European war, not the war between the Black-and-Tans and the I.R.A. nor the Civil War, nor this dirty riot they called the Boynmore Soviet war (moryah)—a German mine was washed ashore at Carramore. Now it was the mercy of God that sent me that same morning killing hares among the whins near Carramore, dearly beloved brethren. Well, I was nearly rooted to the ground when I saw Darby Donnellan and a swarm of other tinkers whack-

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ing away at a mine with soldering irons and hammers and chisels—and all for the sake of a dirty little bit of copper. Yes, 'twas indeed the mercy of God that sent me killing hares there that morning, because if I wasn't there, our little towneen was done for. Well, I let one roar at the tinkers and scattered them, and I sent word to the police who kept guard on the mine until a squad of Royal Engineers came along from Galway and dismantled the mine scientifically. And the officer in charge of the soldiers told me that if I hadn't stopped the tinkers in the nick of time, not only would our towneen have been obliterated, but the very foundations of the little chapel miles away from here that Walter Heneghan (the Lord have mercy on his soul!) built on the top of Croagh Patrick, would have been shaken.

"Now, dearly beloved brethren, in spite of the Nenagh Creamery Bolsheviks and the Tinkers' Soviet in Boynmore, I think that our Irish people are too sensible and too religious to listen to the gospels of atheism and plunder that the Communists preach. Of course there are some dirty little jakeens in the slums of Dublin who go round preaching the pernicious doctrines of Moscow, but they won't succeed in turning the heads of the solid sensible people of Ireland. And there is a handful of Communist corner-boys in many of our little towns in Ireland. Communism has reared its ugly head among some scrub even as far as Claremorris and Castlebar. But if the worst should happen, if Dublin went Communist and if Castlebar and Westport went Communist, there will be no Communism this side of Croagh Patrick while I'm alive. I'll larrup the Communists with the blackthorn I use on the night-walkers.

"But, dearly beloved brethren, there is no danger whatsoever of Ireland going Communist, please God.

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But the bad example that Boynmore has given to Russia, just when the Moscow Bolsheviks were on their last legs, is deplorable. The Moscow papers, I'm told, made great propaganda out of this dirty riot. A man whose word I can depend upon—he is a journalist on one of the leading Dublin papers, and that will vouch for his veracity—told me that one Moscow paper had this big heading—‘Boynmore Soviet Stronghold bombarded by entire force of the Free State Navy.’

“Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of Basil Boyd-Brown, of London, and of the tinkers who were killed at Rathnacopall. As they were all strangers, and did not belong to the parish, I don’t know their names, but I hope that God in His infinite mercy has forgiven them, although they died without the priest. Your prayers are also requested for the following people from our parish who died during the week: Mrs. Bridget Pat Muldoon Meehaul, of Carrowbeg, and Tom McGirr Pat, of Bealnamuc. Also for the prayers of the following former parishioners of Boynmore, who died in America: Floor-Manager John O’Donnell and Attorney James McGrail, of Chicago, Sheriff James Joe MacManus, of Sacramento, John Joe Toole, of San Francisco, Judge O’Mahony, of Boston, Massachusetts, Traffic-Manager Thomas Kerrigan, Mary O’Toole, James Quinn, Phelim McHale, Patrick D’Arcy, John Jennings, Police-Inspector Mulally, Officers John Brennan, Pat O’Toole, Antony Fergus and James Maneghan, of New York. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!”

C H A P T E R X

THE TINKER RAIDS THE *FREEMAN'S JOURNAL*

(1)

*“While there’s Castle gold to feed the Freeman’s Journal,
The Constitutional Movement must go on;
Until William Archer Redmond’s made a colonel
The Constitutional Movement must go on,
And on and on and on for ever more.”*

FERGUS O’CONNOR

“SEAN LESTER Warns Bolivia!”

This headline—in the vein of the famous warning by the *Skibbereen Eagle* that it had its eye on the Emperor of Germany—appeared in front-page heavy blacks in a prominent Dublin daily during the early stages of Bolivia’s fight with a neighbouring state. Sean Lester, world-famous for his stand against the Nazis at Danzig as Commissioner for the League of Nations, was, at the time he warned Bolivia, secretary to Mr. de Valera, during the latter’s year of office as President of the Council of the League of Nations. He has recently been appointed Deputy-secretary to the Council of the League.

Sean Lester’s high position in the diplomatic world he owes, apart from his own undoubted inherent ability, primarily to the fact that he was formerly news-editor of the *Freeman’s Journal*—a famous organ which was founded in 1763 by the notorious Higgins, the “Sham Squire,” in support of Dublin Castle rule, and which

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afterwards became fiercely militant in support of Irish Nationalism. An idea of the prominent part which that organ played in Irish political life during its chequered career, and of the pull which its proprietors and staff had with successive Governments, may be gleaned from the fact that many of its leader-writers, editors and news-editors manned the Irish judicial bench, while its last proprietor, the late Martin FitzGerald, a lurid, colourful personality, was raised to the rank of senator, and its last editor, the late Paddy Hooper, beloved by all who knew him, was made deputy-chairman of the Irish Senate.

Following the cue of John Redmond, the *Freeman's Journal* threw itself with might and main into the recruiting campaign after the outbreak of the Great War and received a substantial subsidy from Dublin Castle for its services to the cause of the Allies. And after the 1916 rebellion had been stamped out, the *Freeman's Journal* vigorously endorsed the policy proclaimed once more by John Redmond and John Dillon that "the constitutional movement must go on." And the constitutional movement went on and on like a circulating decimal, until, as a result of the General Election of 1918, it ceased to be. Fuit! Whereupon the *Freeman's Journal*, with ready political pliability, backed the physical force movement. After the establishment of the Irish Free State it stoutly advocated the cause represented by Collins, and, after his death, by Cosgrave. Intimidation of advertisers and newsagents and other forms of systematic boycotting by De Valera's followers landed this fighting organ into insolvency, and it ceased to exist in December 1923 after a life of 160 years.

Quousque haec omnia? in the phrasing of the scholiasts. Merely to show that the *Freeman's Journal*, while very versatile in shifting its policy in accordance with the

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political currents of the moment, was such a powerful and trenchant organ that on one occasion the Black-and-Tans set fire to it, and on another occasion turned its editorial staff into the street in the small hours of the morning, and threatened to shoot them for their out-spoken attitude towards the campaign of loot, arson and murder carried out by the agents of the British Government. A couple of years later the Republicans wrecked the printing machinery of the *Freeman's Journal*, and threw the staff into the street during the fight between Michael Collins and De Valera. I was present on both occasions when the ejections occurred.

After new machinery had been installed at the expense of the Free State Government, Michael Collins insisted that until things became more settled in the country, the office of the *Freeman's Journal* was to be protected by troops. Almost simultaneously with the installation of our protectors in the various departments in the office, we all received copies of a circular which ran thus:

“All editors, sub-editors and leader-writers of the enemy press are hereby proclaimed to be enemies of the Irish Republic, and as such, are liable to be shot at sight.”

The enemy press was, of course, the *Freeman's Journal*, and what we, the doomed prosscripts, resented was the fact that the reporters were not also honoured with a threat of martyrdom for their principles, or rather for their bread and butter. For it is notorious that journalists “write for food, and feed because they write.” The explanation for this discrimination between us and the reporters was soon forthcoming. One of the leaders of the Republican forces stated that reporters, taken all round, were honest lads, who wrote a straight account of what they saw. It was the “cringing

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sub-editors," who—by *suppressio veri* and lurid misleading captions in writing up their "dirty little stories"—were doing all the damage.

"I'm sorry for you chaps," said Michael Twoomey, whom we nicknamed "greased lightning" on account of his ability of doing unaided a non-stop talk of Tim Healy's most turgid floods of vitriolic eloquence. "You're not bad lads at all, but all the same Conroy was right in the adjective he applied to you. Conroy showed unerring acumen and sagacity in labelling sub-editors. Subs have a regular flair for murdering stories. They are a destructive, not a constructive force in the life of a newspaper. If they meet a word they don't understand, out it goes. Many's the fine story I wrote in the reporter's room, only to find next morning as I opened my *Freeman's Journal* at breakfast that it had been emasculated by the blue pencil of the sub-editor."

One sweltering July night I was busily engaged in my rôle of "loot sub-editor," as my comrades called me. My job for the time being was to sift out the most audacious of the coups carried out in broad daylight by marauders throughout the country. Taking advantage of the disturbed state of the distracted nation, hordes of scalliwags swooped down on banks, shops and private houses, and pretended that they were acting under instructions of the I.R.A. I always had an enormous bundle of stuff to wade through nightly in order to make up my story—piles of letters and telegraph flimsies from country correspondents, while every now and then a spicy supplement would be added by messages via the 'phone from the city and suburbs. The looters became more recklessly daring day by day, and my job became proportionately more and more difficult. As the old R.I.C. had long since been disbanded and the new police force was unarmed and inexperienced,

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the country was absolutely at the mercy of the looters. In many districts such was the contempt for the custodians of the law that the robber gangs, who dodged leisurely from town to town, frequently swooped down on the Civic Guards, as the successors of the R.I.C. were called, and stripped the uniforms off their backs. On one occasion I myself encountered two Civic Guards returning from patrol duty clad only in their shirts.

In accordance with the happy-go-lucky methods of Dublin journalism, we did not "spike" copy of which we had either taken a précis or which we had rejected—we merely threw it on the floor. This inevitably entailed rows between me and our correspondents with the chief sub-editor as umpire whenever a dispute arose regarding the contents of jettisoned copy. After several unpleasant experiences of this nature I adopted a filing system of my own. I used to make up the rejected or milked copy in cylindrical bales, keeping the Post Office "flimsies," as they were called in the jargon of our craft, separate from the manuscript stuff. I then put neat rubber bands around the various bales and marked the date in blue pencil on the outermost sheet.

On the night in question, or rather during the small hours of the morning, I had duly completed my filing operations, and was smoking a cigarette while waiting for a rush proof of my loot story. I was rather pleased with my night's work, as my story opened with a thrilling account of a raid on a bank in County Kildare by a gang of strolling tinkers who had been dodging from race-meeting to race-meeting. Foremost among the gang figured Darby Donnellan, the famous Mayo tinker, who turned up once more in the news after his sensational Soviet *putsch* in Rossmore. This time he had taken the staff of the bank so completely by surprise that they all automatically shot up their hands

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at the word of command. They helped themselves to all the loose cash lying round, Darby taking in his stride a fat roll of Bank of England notes crisply snuggling under neat rubber-bands. They were hardly outside in the street when they were relieved of their loot by another marauding gang, who, seeing them enter the bank, lay in wait for them.

"Darby is a sticker," said Andy Murphy, our deputy-chief-sub-editor, who was acting for the chief who had taken the night off. "He has been going strong in the looting line ever since 1916. His headquarters are in your part of Mayo, I understand."

"Yes, he hibernates in the shadow of Croagh Patrick. His wife, the widow Moran that was, used to be my nurse. I was only a youngster when I left Boynmore, and I never saw him afterwards until the spring of 1916 when he turned up in Achill. A few weeks later again I met him during the Easter Week Rebellion, when he was taken to Trinity College on a charge of looting. He escaped then. I saw him off and on in Boynmore about a year ago. Oh, by the way, Michael Twoomey, who had let himself rip as usual in his account of Darby's raid, has given in addition to a vivid story of the tinker's latest raid, a detailed account of 'The Tinkers' Soviet.' He has also represented Darby as a bigamist. He says that the tinker has three wives—all still alive."

"Of course you cut that out—didn't you?"

"Yes. Michael will be annoyed. I also cut out sheaves of his ponderous polysyllables."

"That will infuriate him," chuckled Andy. "He is sure to kick up a row about it. Have you kept the copy?"

"You bet I have. Here it is," I said, holding up the neat roll of flimsies.

"Is that all Michael's dossier?"

"Oh no! His story accounts for about seventy

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flimsies. There are also messages in this bale from about twenty of our rural correspondents. If Michael kicks up a row——”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” cut in our armed guard, a raw-looking bovine lad in frayed civilian garb who had been dozing in an armchair beside me all night, “but could you settle this damn thing for me? I heard tell that you were in the English army. I can’t shoot this bloody bolt home. It’s got jammed. If the sergeant came in now ‘tis how he’d blame me, and I’m sure the bloody thing’s broke anyways.”

I stared for a moment in dumb amazement at our sorry-looking protector, as I took the rifle in my hands.

“Have you had no musketry training?” I asked.

“No, sir. I was in a drapery and grocery shop in Clonashee until a week ago.”

“You’re a rummy youth to defend us against a raid by De Valera’s boys. Do you know anything about the mechanism of a rifle?”

“Well, I’m learning, sir. I think I can load and unload it. When you have mended it, give it back to me, and see if I’m working it right.”

I settled the mechanism in a moment, and explained to him that the rifle was in perfect order, but had got jammed through his own clumsiness and ignorance.

“Here you are,” I said. “Remember now that there are eleven cartridges loaded. Ten in the magazine and one in the chamber. Now I want you to empty the whole eleven on the table here. And then you are to reload them all, so that if eleven Republicans come in that door you can present them with a Free State bullet apiece. That’s what you’re here for.”

He took the rifle, and after staring at the bolt steadily for about a minute, started to fumble clumsily with it. Suddenly I noticed to my horror that the muzzle of

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the implement was pointed towards the right eye of our foreign-sub-editor who sat opposite me. The latter simultaneously realised the peril of his situation, and went a sickly green, but did not dare to budge. His eye was riveted on the tiny gleaming aperture from which death might spring at him at any moment. Quick as lightning, but as unobtrusively as possible, I slid my hand under the barrel of the rifle, tilting it upwards in such a manner that if it went off, the trajectory of the bullet would be through the ceiling.

"That's better," said the foreign-sub-editor with a ghastly effort at a smile. "If it goes off now, it will only kill a reporter. It's much easier to get a new reporter than a new sub. And now, look here, my lad. You're a funny type of soldier——"

"Oh! begob, here's my supper, and me half dead with hunger," cut in the youth, ignoring the speaker. "Devil a bite I had to eat since we took over the defence of this bloody office to-day. Now what do you think of that, and us sitting here in the very gap of death, waiting to be blew up at any moment? Over here, Mikeen Tom, with the grub."

His colleague, also a rather sorry-looking youth in civilian garb, and with a briar pipe in the corner of his mouth, laid before our defender a tray on which there were tea, bread and butter and a plate of bacon and eggs.

"Them eggs smells burned," commented our defender, after almost touching them with an appraising nose. "And the bacon's only half done."

He poured out a cup of tea, and then eyed the brew with distaste.

"The bloody tea itself isn't pulled. Jaysus!"

He cut one of the eggs in two.

"Cripes," he said bitterly. "Is this what the men died for?"

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"What's that you said?" asked the foreign-sub-editor with a quizzical expression.

"I was only talking to myself," replied the youth truculently. "I was just remarking that the men who shed their blood for Ireland in Easter Week and in the battles with the Black-and-Tans would turn in their graves if they knew that the youth of Ireland who had stepped into the gap of death, carrying the banner of freedom, to shed their blood in defence of you and the likes of you against De Valera's army, was to be half starved and fed on burnt eggs and raw bacon and tea that isn't pulled itself, the ways I am. Here I am waiting mebbe to be blew up in defence of you——"

"For God's sake," said the foreign-sub-editor, "don't defend me with that rifle until you know how to use it. Use your fists or your brogues, if you like."

The embryo soldier eyed him scornfully.

"When the Volyunteers manned the gap of death in Easter Week I was only a gosoor, but where were you in Easter Week?"

"I was out on the Western Front, fighting for the rights of small nationalities."

"Now, weren't you and your likes the silly mugs to believe that old 'Wait and See' and Lloyd George meant to keep their word? Well, tell me this, where were you when the youth of Ireland was shedding their blood in the ditches fighting against the Black-and-Tans?"

"Oh, I was in the ditches, and keeping such excellent cover in said ditches that the bullets of the Black-and-Tans passed overhead. Now, laddie, don't point that rifle towards me again. That's right. Point it towards the ceiling. You'll probably bag Michael Twoomey before morning. Personally I think he's a rotten reporter anyway."

"They call this a supper, do they?" said the youth

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as he chewed a mouthful with a grimace.

"I must admit they are catering for you very inefficiently," agreed the foreign-sub-editor with studied urbanity. "But you must make some allowances. This is a newspaper office, not a restaurant."

"'Tisn't here alone that the grub's bad," went on the youth sullenly. "It's the same in all the canteens throughout the Free State. Pig's head and cabbage day after day for dinner. And this bloody tea isn't pulled itself."

"Well, I have just read an agency report stating that General McKeon, the famous blacksmith of Ballinalee, is going to fly round the country to visit all the barracks, and that he is going to see that all you chaps are properly fed and housed."

"Pity his old anvil hadn't wings, and he could fly on it," sneered the youth.

"General McKeon was an excellent blacksmith as well as a brave soldier, my boy. And it is very ungracious of you to sneer at his peace-time calling. Well, I was just going to say when you interrupted me that General McKeon is going to establish a regular messing-system —you know what I mean, with canteens exactly on the pattern of those in English barracks. He is keen on etiquette and table manners. You will have, among other things, serviettes at dinner every day."

"I never ate them," commented the youth. "But thanks be to God for any change from this everlasting bacon and cabbage."

(2)

"Hands up in the name of the I.R.A.!"

In response to this demand uttered in a raucous voice by a huge raw-boned man who stood framed in the

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door of the sub-editors' room, we all jumped to our feet and shot up our hands. All except our chief, who, though deadly pale, remained seated.

"Hands up or I'll blow your block off," roared the raw-boned man, pointing his revolver at our chief's head.

"I'm damned if I'll stand up at the orders of a common robber like you," retorted Andy with an admirable but, I thought, very foolish type of courage. "You don't belong to the I.R.A. You're Darby Donnellan, a dirty tramp-tinker, better known as Darby the Drouth."

Yes. Andy was right. It was Darby Donnellan, disguised by a growth of some weeks' beard. He had now advanced into the middle of the room, taking care all the time to cover his retreat.

"Becripes, I'll make you rise," snarled the tinker. "All you chaps keep your hands up—up, well up. The first that drops a finger gets plugged."

Still keeping us covered with his revolver, he glanced over his shoulder.

"Come along, Hoke the Spud and Yalla Meal, and dig that old bastard out of his chair," he shouted.

Two other armed toughs sprang into the room.

"Here, Yalla Meal, you look after the lad in the chair. Hoke the Spud, you keep the other bastards covered while I go through their pockets. This is pay-night in the *Freeman*. Hurry up. We must make a quick grab. We might get trapped."

Just then Darby's eye fell on me.

"I seen you somewhere before," he said with a puzzled expression. "Now, where was it?"

"In Achill, Darby," I replied. "And also in Trinity College during the Easter Week Rebellion. Surely you remember me, Darby?"

"Ay, begob. But you were in khaki that time, and

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I'd easy distemember you in ordinary clothes. And it's six years ago, and you've changed since then a lot."

All the time he was talking he had his eye focused on the roll of Post Office flimsies with whose rubber bands I was fiddling nervously.

"What's them?" he said suddenly, making a grab at the flimsies.

"Oh, don't touch them, Darby," I replied, a vaguely subconscious instinct prompting me to protect my improvised filing system. "You don't want them, they're just—they're—"

"Them's Bank of England notes," snapped the tinker. "Hand them over at once, or I'll smash your face to smithereens. They come in handy instead of them bundle of notes them thieves took from me."

I had a sudden inspiration.

"Look here, Darby," I said. "That money isn't mine. Don't take it. It belongs to Martin FitzGerald. He left it here just a minute ago by accident, and he is bound to come back for it."

"Martin FitzGerald won't miss it. He's rolling in money and whiskey. Let go your hold of it, or by hell I'll make a sieve of you."

I made a feeble gesture of protest, but his hairy paw had already descended heavily on the roll of flimsies.

"For God's sake, Darby," I pleaded. "Don't—"

"Would you kiss my arse?" he snarled. "Come on, Yalla Meal and Hoke the Spud. Leave these bastards their few rotten quid. I've got a big haul of Bank of England fivers. Clear out of this to hell quick before we're nabbed. Back out with your guns levelled on the swine."

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(3)

"I'll run after them and plug them," announced our defender, wrenching himself suddenly from his coma of funk. He snatched up the rifle which had slipped from his palsied grasp as, like the rest of us, he had jumped to the tinker's order, "Hands up."

"No," said our foreign-sub-editor. "You stay where you are, sonny, and eat your supper."

"My supper is spoiled anyways. Here, let me run after them. I'll make them divulge that money."

"He hasn't taken any money, my boy," I chipped in. "He has just got a complete and unsubedited dossier of the latest batch of lootings throughout the Free State, including a very vivid account of his own abortive raid on the bank yesterday."

"Where he drew another blank," chipped in the chief. "And, I say, Gerald, what about including in your loot-story an account of his raid on our office. Red-hot news that! The only thing is this—I'd like to get Paddy Hooper's approval first. We didn't come very well out of the thing, did we?"

"You came out best," I replied. "You kept your seat and refused to budge."

"Yes, yes, I know," he replied testily. "But we shouldn't have let the dirty scut slip away like that."

"They were armed," I protested. "It would be a battle of lead pencils against revolvers, if we put up a fight then. See what an ass Darby has made of himself. He has bolted with a rather highly coloured version of his career by Michael Twoomey. I think it is a lovely joke. Darby will be pleased when he opens his treasure."

"Yes, it was a comic interlude, if you look at it that way. But it is a terrible disgrace that common marauders should break into the office of Ireland's leading news-

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paper and hold up the staff. By the way, what was that soldier down there doing with his rifle while the black-guards were in the office?"

"Nothing, thank God," said the foreign-sub-editor. "He maintained a masterly inactivity."

"I wanted to go after them and plug them, but them lads stopped me," shouted the youth truculently, shaking a dirty accusing digit at me and the foreign-sub-editor. "I dare them to deny that they stopped me."

"Thank God we did," said the foreign sub-editor. "Your bullets would probably have missed Darby the Drouth and his colleagues, and reached us via the floor. The walls of this office are riddled with bullets since you chaps came along."

"Our lads must practise somewhere," came the aggrieved protest of the embryo soldier. "Some of them is only joined up. I came here straight from the drapery and grocery."

"Would you mind hopping out, young man," said the chief, "and asking your sergeant how he let these ruffians slip past him? Rummy way of defending us!"

"Don't take your rifle with you, for God's sake," pleaded the foreign-sub-editor nervously. "Park it in the corner there."

"And get court-martialled mebbe for abandoning my rifle during warfare, is it? No damned fear. It's against regulations."

"All right. Hop it. But, here, let me see that the safety catch and cut-off are O.K. Wait a minute. Yes, it's foolproof now. Off you go."

Our protector had just reached the door when it was swung suddenly open, coming into violent contact with his amorphous nose. "Cripes!" he groaned. "My nose is broke in smithereens. "What the hell do you mean by charging into a room like a mad bull?"

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"Is that the way to address your superiors, you Tipperary clodhopper?" barked the new arrival, resplendent in a brand-new uniform. "If I report you to the commandant, you'll be court-martialled—no, you'll be demob—demobilised, you dirty lout."

"Demobilised! I'll have a bob each way on that."

"Don't you know your own language, you lepping gorilla?"

"That's not my language. My language is Irish, and I'm none of your 'La bra' or 'A cara' Irish-speakers, like the Dublin jakeens. Demobilised, moryah!"

"Yes, demobilised—cashiered—dismissed—sacked—bloody well kicked out of the army."

"Well, why the hell didn't you say that and have done with it?" sneered the youth. "Huh, mebbe I'd be glad to clear out before you have the chance to sack me. I'm sick of Mick Collins's cabbage-water grub. If you seen the supper I got! I'll chuck the whole bloody thing. I'd sooner fight for the devil in hell—or even for Ned Carson himself. I know what I'll do—I'll join De Valera's boys. Up Dev!"

"If you dare to leave the army while there's a war on you'll be shot for deserting in the face of the enemy, you omadhaun."

"And if I don't desert, it'll be—what the bloody hell is it? demobil—kicked out of the bloody army. So I'm for it anyways. Well, I'll think it over. Mebbe I'll desert, and you'll pinch me and sack me. Well so long, I'm crossing to the opposite side of the street to the D.M.P. canteen to down a pint."

"You'll do no damn such thing. You'll have a throat like a limekiln by the time you drink your next pint. I'm going to shove you into the clink."

"Clink, my ____."

"Down that stairs with you at once, or you'll go down

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arse foremost. No more lip, I tell you. You're for the clink."

"You go to hell! I'm going for my pint this minute, and after I'm going to join De Valera's boys. He is going to win, anyway. Didn't Saint Columcille prophesy that Ireland was going to be saved by a Spaniard? Up Dev!"

(4)

"Gentlemen," said the man in the brand-new uniform with a deprecatory expression, when the clatter of our defender's brogues had died away on the stairs, "that lad isn't coming back here again. I'll send up another guard."

"You may keep him if he is like the one you've shifted," replied our chief. "That lad was a menace—not a soldier."

"He's for the clink, sir."

"That's good. But don't let him take that rifle with him into the clink to play with. And now, would you mind telling us how these blackguards managed to get past the guard?"

"Well, sir, it was this way. Them buckos held up Mr. Tom Beary, one of your reporters, outside the *Freeman* office, and, sticking a gun up against his ribs, made him get them past the man at the door by saying that they were journalists from the West who wanted to give in a report about a terrible battle they had seen between De Valera's crowd and our lads. Then they made him show them this room, and before they came in they gagged him and threw him into the lavatory. He is there still."

"Leave him there. But it seems incredible to me how Darby the Drouth could rush Tom Beary under threats

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past you all. Had you been alert you couldn't fail——”

“Well, sir. It's easy explaining. Mr. Beary, sir, I'm sorry to say, was not too sober, and——”

“Don't mind that. He never is too sober.”

“Well, sir, it was pitch dark in the street in accordance with the regulations, and the front office had no light in it. And then, sir—well, I must admit that we were having a little ceilidh in the guard-room. Martin FitzGerald had sent us over a couple of bottles of D.W.D. as a present, and we got a half-barrel of porter from the bloody old pub across the road, and some of the lads were playing cards and some of them learning rifle mechanism and the ways to draw a pin from a bomb.”

“They were using dummy bombs, of course, I presume?”

The man in the brand-new uniform, who was standing beside me, nudged me in the ribs, and whispered in an aside:

“Watch me taking a rise out of your chief and that other buck with all the guff out of him. I'll put the heart across the pair of them with the yarn I'll give them.”

Then striding up to the chief's desk, he went on breezily:

“Dummy bombs isn't no good. It's only when the lads knows that they'll be blew up if they pull the pin, that you can get it into their brains what the pin is for.”

“But if one of them pulled the pin by mistake, what then?”

He grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

“Kingdom-come, sir, for me and you and all of us. We'd know all about it when we got to the other side. But there's no fear of that. We have an instructor below who was all through the Great War from the beginning

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to the end. He was blew up three times—twice at the Somme, and again at Amiens. He was six months in hospital after his last somersault. Of course you know him, sir. Everyone in Dublin knows old Shellshock."

"Shellshock! Shellshock!" exclaimed our foreign-sub-editor. "Why, the man is a nervous wreck!"

"I admit that, sir, but he is a damn fine instructor, and he knows more about timing a Mills bomb than any man alive. You won't see his eggs bursting in his own hand, or in mid-air or landing on the enemy so as to give them time to throw themselves flat. Plop they go the minute they land on the spot."

"Andy," said our foreign-sub-editor, turning towards the chief, his face pale and grim, "I'm not a coward, but also I'm not a bloody fool. This is not a newspaper office—it's a damn volcano on the verge of eruption. I'm going across to Paddy Hooper to hand in my resignation. I'd a damned sight rather chance being potted by De Valera's thugs than be protected by Mick Collins's condottieri."

The man in the brand-new uniform had meanwhile returned to my desk.

"Didn't I know I'd put the wind up in him?" he chuckled in a whisper. "Them Cork men is all the same. All brag and bum about all the Huns and Tans he killed. I wonder what the hell they gave him the M.C. for anyways. M.C. indeed, moryah!"

CHAPTER XI

THE TINKER AND MYSELF DODGE THE BULLETS

(1)

"We have met before, haven't we?" said Michael Collins, extending his hand to me as he entered the private office of Paddy Hooper, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*. "Now, let me see, where was it?"

"In the Irish Club in Charing Cross Road," I replied. "You were with Lord Birkenhead."

Collins's eyes twinkled merrily—their normal expression.

"To be sure—so it was. Sam Geddes introduced us. It was just a week before we signed the Treaty. Oh yes, Galloper and myself often dropped in to see old Sam. A great old chap is Sam—an Ulster Presbyterian who would make a fine liaison officer between North and South. Have you seen him lately?"

"Yes, about a week ago when I was over in London. He spoke very affectionately of you, by the way."

"Sam and myself always got on splendidly," said Collins with a break in his voice. I looked up at him. His eyes were moist.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to put Sam on the Boundary Commission," said Paddy Hooper with a smile. "He knows both Northerners and Southerners so well, and he has a wheedling way about him."

An impish glint came into Collins's eye.

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"Begob, you're quite right, Paddy. Sam has a wheedling way—that's the exact word that describes him. Sam could sell hams in a synagogue. A born deludherer—if ever there was one."

Then suddenly the merriment died out of his eyes and he sighed.

"Galloper and old Sam were so optimistic about Ireland," he went on. "I'm sure they're both very fed-up now. Poor old Sam told me that Galloper nearly broke down when he told him that I had pledged myself to seal the terms of the Treaty with my heart's blood if necessary. Looking back on it, I made a rather melodramatic gesture, and used a blue-mould cliché. Sealing the Treaty with my heart's blood! Queen's bloody theatre stuff! But I meant it, Paddy—by God, I did!"

Then in a flash there was once more a merry glint in his eye, and he broke into a hearty fit of laughter.

"Wait till I tell you what old Sam said about De Valera, boys. 'Mick,' says he, 'did you ever see a sourer-looking man? Begob, I wouldn't like him to look into my morning jug of cream.' And if you saw Sam's face when he said that! It put Galloper into such a bloody fit of laughter that he forgot to stop squirting soda into my whiskey after I said 'when' until he half-emptied the bloody syphon into it. Cripes, he nearly swallowed the bloody big Havana that was stuck in his face."

Then with his restless mercurial temperament he sprang to his feet suddenly, and strode to and fro through the office, while a tense anxious expression swept over his features. A lock of his rebellious hair drooped over his forehead, and he dashed it back—a typical gesture of his.

"Any news about the Mayo front, Paddy?" he said, wheeling round abruptly to the editor.

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“Well, I’m sending Griffin down to the west—to Boynmore, which is a hotbed of the Irregulars. He’s going to enquire into the position there for the *Freeman*.”

“When is he going?”

“To-morrow.”

Collins stared hard at the editor for a minute, and once more a merry smile lit up his face.

“They don’t like the *Freeman* down there, Paddy, so isn’t it rather like sending Griffin ‘west’ to send him west? Excuse the pun, Paddy. You remember the proscription against the editors, sub-editors and leader-writers of the enemy press. He’s liable to be shot at sight.”

“Oh, that’s all right, Collins, I’ve transferred him to the reporting staff.”

“Well, you had better give him a letter stating that you have transferred him, so that if he’s nabbed by any of the wild bucks down there, he’ll be bullet-proof.”

“I’ve thought of that already, and Griffin actually has it in his possession.”

“Excellent. And I say, Paddy, ask him to find out all he can about the strength of the Republicans down there. And above all I’d like to know how they’re off for ammunition.”

“Do I understand that you want a private report on these points?”

“Oh, not at all. That would be downright espionage—or so they would make it out, and it might be very nasty for Mr. Griffin. I want the whole thing above board. Let him make out his report for the paper—an exhaustive report of the strength of these laddos down there. In that way I shall get the information I want, and he cannot get into trouble for giving a detailed account to his paper. Unless a state of actual war develops between us and the anti-Treatyites, a reporter cannot

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be arrested or punished for writing a straightforward report of what has come under his observation."

"That's so," said Paddy Hooper. "After all, no state of war exists so far."

"Not so far," commented Collins grimly. "I thought that things were coming to a head when De Valera's bucks came in and smashed all your machinery and threw you all into the street. That was a dirty piece of work."

"Oh, by the way, Collins, would you like to see the new Hoe printing-presses and the twenty linotype machines that we have just got to replace the ones that the Republicans smashed up on us a couple of weeks ago? As your Government has paid for the machines you might care to come along and see them. We can just slip along the passage here through the case-room."

"Righto, Paddy. And after that I want yourself and Griffin to dine with me at the Gresham. They've the best bloody ten-year-old John J. in the Gresham, and beripes, they know how to bottle Guinness properly."

(2)

Rosanna was seated on a creepie by the turf fire when I entered her mother's little cottage. As she rose to welcome me and moved across the floor it was only too obvious that the fears she had expressed when I saw her the day her husband was killed after the abortive Tinkers' Soviet *putsch* were verified.

She interpreted my involuntary glance, and flushed slightly as she threw a shawl across her shoulders.

"You see, agrah, I was right when I said I was afeared I was that ways again the time you were here before when you tried to save my poor assaleen from being

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killed in the wars between the Free State navy and the Tinkers. It's a terrible thing carrying a child for a man is over four months cold in the grave. However, God's will be done."

"Yes, Rosanna, that's the right way of looking at things. Tell me, have you seen your father lately?"

"Well, agrah, I seen too much of him and so did my poor ma, but I hope we are shut of him now for a little whileen anyways. The I.R.A. has just took him a few minutes before you came in the door. They took him to the barracks and they are going to shoot himself and Hoke the Spud to-day for looting and bank robbery, and him letting on he was a commandant in the I.R.A."

"Shoot him to-day? Shoot him, Rosanna?"

"Aye, shoot him, so the I.R.A. said. They said they would shoot him without any trial, because there's a war now between the Staters and the Republicans."

"A war, Rosanna? What do you mean?"

"Didn't you hear tell how Michael Collins attacked the Four Courts in Dublin last night?"

"What?"

"Didn't you hear tell of it? You're a funny man to be printing newspapers and not hearing the news that everybody in Boynmore knows already."

"Well, Rosanna, I have only just got up, and I ran across to see you and your mother. At any rate the Dublin morning papers won't be here until midday. But, I tell you, that's news to me. And tell me, Rosanna, what are the Republicans here doing? Are they going to fight?"

"Ask me an easier one, agrah. There's only about two hundred of them in Boynmore, and most of them knows nothing about even handling a rifle itself."

"Are there many of the old I.R.A. among them, Rosanna?"

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"Damn few of them, agrah. Most of them lads that goes swaggering about now as Republican soldiers were under the bed when Mick Collins was fighting the Black-and-Tans. They were freckened of their lives of the Black-and-Tans, but they think that Mick is too soft-hearted and fond of the Irish to be hard on his own."

"I suppose, then, Rosanna, most of them are badly trained, are they?"

"Most of them have no training at all, and only about a quarter of them has uniforms. They're that clumsy with the rifle that every other day we hear of them shooting one another accidentally. There was six funerals during the last fortnight—all young lads who was accidentally shot while on parade. And look here, agrah, don't you let on I told you anything, as them Republicans threatened me several times lately that they would shoot me as a spy. They say that the pension I got for the poor little ass was killed in the wars was only a bribe to get me to inform on them."

"All right, Rosanna. Mum's the word. And how is your dear old mother, my old nurse?"

"She's gone up to Jimmy P.'s to buy some groceries. She'll be near mad with joy to see you again. She's terrible fond of you."

"And I'm very fond of her too, Rosanna. And why shouldn't I be? She saved me from being eaten alive by a pig when I was a baby."

"Hands up!"

I wheeled round suddenly and saw two young men, one in a seedy uniform and the other in a seedier trench-coat and a passé velours hat with revolvers pointed towards my chest.

"What's the meaning of this?" I asked angrily.

"You are under arrest," said the man in uniform.

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“By whose authority?”

“By the authority of the I.R.A.”

“On what charge?”

“You’re a spy. And this young woman has been giving you information.”

“You’re a liar, snotty nose,” retorted Rosanna fiercely. “Mr. Griffin has not come to this house to spy. He came here to see me ma.”

“All right. He can spin that yarn at the court-martial. He’ll find it hard to make the commandant, who will be the president of the court, believe it. Our commandant hates acquitting anyone brought before him.”

(3)

I was catapulted—not merely thrown—into what had been the lock-up of the old R.I.C. barracks in Boynmore. In the semi-darkness of the dingy room into which I had been flung so suddenly from the June noon-day glare outside, I distinguished the shadowy outlines of two other prisoners. I peered hard, but could not make out their features right away. Presently, however, my eyes got accustomed to the dim light of the room, and I recognised my two prison comrades in distress as Darby the Drouth and Hoke the Spud.

“Oh, beripes, here’s another Mayo man to join us,” guffawed Darby, as he chewed off a big piece from a junk of hard black tobacco known locally as “Limerick Twist.” “You’re for the bullet, or mebbe the rope.”

“You’re very consoling, Darby,” I replied coldly. “Why do you think I’m in such a tight corner?”

“Your paper backs the Staters, and the Republic would give a pension for life to any man would quietly slit your throat. There’s good blood-money going for your carcase.”

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"Thanks, Darby. And now what about yourself? Why are you in here?"

Darby shifted his quid of tobacco to the other side of his mouth. "Well, if you want to know, 'tis what the slaves of the capitalist press, the likes of yourself, would call looting or robbery, but what I call expropriating the burjoisy. I stand for the principles of the great Granuaille, the pirate queen of Clew Bay that beat hell out of the fleet of bloody Queen Bess of England, and by the way, Granuaille was one of my ancestors, and her principles was the same as those of Karl Marx. Karl Marx and herself was great friends——"

"Oh, to blazes with Karl Marx and Granuaille, Darby," cut in Hoke the Spud. "What I want to know is will we be hung or shot? And tell me which way does a man get his death most easy?"

"Well, now meself, 'tis a damned sight sooner I'd rather be hung," replied Darby thoughtfully, after a pause. "To start with, I'd sooner die with a whole skin than to be bleeding like a stuck pig all over the place, and, if you want to get your death quick and not by dint of choking for a long time, all you have to do is to help the hangman by drawing up your knees towards the butt of your belly and then giving a good jump downwards when he draws the bolt. 'Twas by dint of taking too strong a jump that Fighting Fitzgerald broke the rope at Castlebar and had to be hung all over again. 'Tis a grand way of dying to be sure and it runs in my family. Sure, my own great-grandfather, who was hung forninst the public in Castlebar for stealing a sheep in Kiltimagh, he used to say that it was a grand death surely to die dancing on the air and you grinning with your tongue stuck out to show you didn't give a curse for the bloody world you were leaving behind you. Becripes, he was a grand man. 'Twas great to hear him

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singing that fine Dublin hanging song that Dean Swift wrote: 'The night before Larry was stretched.' A darling song that. I disremember it all but the lines:

'He kicked too, but that was all pride,
And very soon it was all over.
With his face to old Dublin he died,
And that night he was under the clover.'"

"Arrah, shut up, Darby," said Hoke the Spud with a shudder, while his face went tallowy. "I seen dogs hung and they didn't die easy, and I'm sure 'tis harder for a Christian getting his death by choking. 'Tis a fine death to see a flash of lightning coming out of the muzzles of a line of guns, and before you knew where you were, you were up in heaven with all the saints and the angels and the holy martyrs that died for Ireland."

"Isn't it sure you are of heaven?" sneered Darby. "Mebbe 'tis in hell you'd find yourself with all the Belfast Protestants."

Hoke the Spud spat fiercely on the floor—a saliva-less, symbolical spit.

"And you, Darby the Drouth, are you wanting to make out that the good God that is going to sit in judgement on us in an hour or two at most mebbe, sends all Belfast Protestants to hell?"

Darby scratched his head, and was lost in thought for some time. Then he spat a mouthful of tobacco-juice over Hoke the Spud's head through the barred window.

"Now, I wouldn't say but that an odd Belfast Protestant slips past Saint Peter through the golden gates, always barring Ned Carson and the likes."

"Arrah, hold your whisht, Darby the Drouth," replied Hoke the Spud scornfully. "It shows your ignorance of theology when you say that Ned Carson is a Belfast

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man. He was born and bred in Dublin, and was educated at Trinity College. Look here, Darby, you know as much about theology as you do about soldering a leaking kettle, and that's damn all."

Darby's lips tightened, and his eyes narrowed to mere slits for a moment while he glared at Hoke the Spud. In his rage he very nearly swallowed his quid of tobacco. He coughed and spluttered for a long time before he could speak.

"Only I don't want to have a murder on me soul and me standing already, so to speak, on the golden stairs, and lose me chance mebbe of being in the company of angels and saints in heaven after we are shot or hung, I'd puck your dirty snot to jelly this blessed minute. How dare you, you dirty nocturnal marauder of potato-fields, say that I'm no good at the profession was in my family since the days of Finn Maccoul?"

"Then why don't you solder leaking kettles or tin cans instead of running round as a penny poet roaring ballads at the fairs and patterns and races? Tell me that?"

Darby fixed Hoke the Spud with a look of withering contempt.

"If you knew anything about the intricacies of economics, you wouldn't ask such a stupid question, Hoke the Spud. Mass production has struck the tool from the hand of the toiler and the bread from his mouth, as Karl Marx said. Until the proletariat confiscates the instruments and means of mass production from the burjoisy and the capitalists, and abolishes priests and peelers, tinsmiths the likes of me cannot keep up the standard of living which the earth owes them, by working at their profession alone. The tyrannical mass-producers of tin kettles and tin cans are able by the aid of machinery and by grinding the faces of the toilers in

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the maelstrom of the juggernauts of their sweat-ed-labour factories to turn out a tin kettle at sixpence. And what woman of the house with a leak in the spout of her tin kettle would call in a tinsmith to exercise his professional skill on it to mend it? She wouldn't take the bother of looking for him. 'Tis how she'd throw the bloody thing away and buy another new for a tanner. Now what have you to say, Hoke the Spud?"

"Darby, I own up that I'm bet in the argument," replied Hoke the Spud with a crestfallen expression. "And sure isn't it foolish of me to argue with a scholar the likes of you that got nearly all the letters of the alphabet put after his name by the Provost of Trinity College? You're right, Darby. The mass production of the explo—of the explo—of the explorers of the proletariat——"

"Exploiters of the proletariat, you mean," cut in Darby patronisingly.

"The mass-production of the exploiterers——"

"Exploiters," corrected Darby again in the same condescending tone.

"The mass-production of the exploiters of the proletariat has made it not worth while to mend a tin kettle, Darby," went on Hoke the Spud. "And soon kettles will be sold at thruppence apiece, what with foreign dumping and——"

"Do you know why England went to war with Germany?" interrupted Darby. "It wasn't in aid of the atrocities of the Beljums, as she pretended. 'Twas because the German exploiters of the proletariat could sell tin kettles a penny cheaper than the English slave-drivers. Sure an old sergeant of the Connaught Rangers who was through the whole war from the races of Mons to the end of the war, told me all about it. Sure one night in No Man's Land near the German trenches he

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let on he was a dead corpse, and didn't he hear the Kayser and his generals arguing——”

Darby's spate of eloquence was stemmed suddenly by an abrupt opening of the door. Three men in uniform entered, two of whom carried picks and shovels.

“Here, you two bloody tinkers,” snapped one of the soldiers with a revolver pointed towards Darby. “You're to hook it to the barracks garden and dig a grave big enough to hold three men. The Commandant's orders is that you are to dig it six feet deep. You're so damned clever at breaking prison and escaping, Darby, that the Commandant is afraid you might make a getaway and you buried and all. So he wants to make sure you're planted deep enough.”

A harsh guffaw from his two colleagues greeted this gruesome joke.

The macabre jester turned towards me.

“You're the third bucko, you know, for the grave the two tinkers is going to dig. I suppose you know that you're as good as shot already. But I hear tell that as a matter of form they're going to court-martial you first. The tinkers is to be shot without any court-martial as they were caught red-handed in highway robbery during wartime, and them letting on too that they done it by the orders of the I.R.A.”

“Tisn't no news to us that we are under sentence of death,” snarled Darby. “So, don't think you can frecken me, my buck. Only one thing I ask. I'd sooner be hung than shot. There's an old sycamore in the garden would hold me up. I can stand on a chair meself and kick it away when the noose is fixed.”

“The regulation is that you're to be shot,” replied the sergeant grimly. “But mebbe the Commandant would stretch a point by allowing your neck to be stretched first, and then to have your skin stuffed with

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bullets. I'm not promising you that he'll allow it, but I'll ask him."

"I don't mind the bullets so long as you don't let fly at me till I've finished wriggling and swiggling at the butt of the rope," said Darby with placid stoicism. "Mind out of my way, young man. I'm going to shoot a tobacco spit, and I don't want to dirty your grand new uniform."

"Oh, beripes, you want jam on it, Darby the Drouth," said the sergeant sarcastically, dodging by an adroit move the trajectory of the tobacco juice. "There's some of us has old grudges against you who will slip a few into you and you doing your dance of death. And look here, no more codology. The Commandant's orders is that you are to be buried in one hour from now at latest. So there's no time to lose. The Staters is coming along from Sligo, and we may have to evacuate the barracks for a few days. So be quick about digging the grave. And—oh—just a minute, I suppose the three of you will be wanting the priest?"

"I do," replied Darby stoically. "I'd like to make my soul before I'm hung."

"Me too," added Hoke the Spud tonelessly.

The sergeant turned towards me.

"And you—what about you?"

"I'll wait until after the court-martial," I replied with an effort at a smile. "Maybe I'll be acquitted."

"Look here to me," said the sergeant with a sigh, and a look of ineffable sadness came into his eyes. "I could nearly cry, I'm so sorry to see you having hopes in the court-martial. In an hour's time you and the tinkers will be under the sod, and the boys planting cabbages over you."

"Cabbages? Cabbages? What's the idea?" I asked, vaguely amused. I regarded all this talk about executions as crude bluff.

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"Well, you see, the Commandant's orders is that the earth is to be spread out even over the big grave and the ground about it, and a hundred cabbage plants is to be planted over it, so that when the Staters comes along they won't suspect anything and go digging up the ground and yelling milè¹ murders about atrocities and that sort of blather."

"Sergeant, we're off now with the two tinkers," said one of the soldiers, "and while they're digging the grave we'll send for the priest, and as soon as he has heard their confessions, we'll plug them and tumble them in."

"Aye, that's right. But don't fill in the grave. Leave it open for the *Freeman's Journal* lad. The court-martial is all codology, but they must go through with it. Now off ye go."

"Come along, Darby," said one of the soldiers, grabbing the tinker roughly by the shoulders.

"Don't lay your dirty hands on me or I'll brain you, you Clare Island savage," yelled the tinker. "Do you think I'm afraid to dig my bloody grave? Here, hand me the pick and the shovel."

"No, no," shouted the sergeant excitedly. "Fall in the firing-squad in the garden before you hand Darby either pick or shovel. He might do one of his getaways again."

(4)

The clatter of the brogues of the tinkers and soldiers through the yard leading to the garden had died away.

"Honest, if I were you, I'd have the priest before the court-martial," said the sergeant to me in a soft whisper. Again that look of inexpressible sadness came into his eyes. I made no reply, but just smiled at him. There was a long pause.

¹ Gaelic. A thousand.

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"I heard the Commandant who will be the president of the court-martial say that he'd sentence you to death unanimously himself, even if the other officers didn't agree with him," he resumed in sepulchral tones after a little while. "So you haven't a chance. And between you and me do you know what? And you to go to confession now and make your soul before the court-martial, you'd be ready for your death and all, and you'd be sure to go to heaven and you'd be a damned sight better off than living in this country, which is going to be a regular hell for the next score of years at least."

"I told you before that I'd wait till after the court-martial," I replied, this time with a slight tinge of irritation.

"'Twas only my anxiety for your immortal soul that made me want you to see the priest now. He could come along while the tinkers is digging the grave. Will I send for him?"

"I've already given you my answer to that question more than once!" I said, looking fiercely at my obdurate tormentor. I was about to follow up my remark with something really nasty when I noticed a peculiar expression of gentle deprecation in the sergeant's eyes. It struck me that his solicitude for my spiritual welfare was genuine. He was obviously a missionary *manqué*.

"You're a good chap, and I have no doubt about your anxiety to save my soul," I said. "However, I am confident that I have many years of life before me, always barring accidents. I regard your anxiety as—well, rather premature. I will admit that I am impressed by your generous interest in me, and I just want to tell you that after this little bit of bother blows over, I'll be very glad if I can ever be of help to you in some small way. This I say because I appreciate the interest you have taken in me."

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“Do you mean that?” he said, his face aglow.

“Yes,” I said.

“Well, you can do me a great favour this very day,” he went on. “I want—I want you——”

“Come on, don’t hesitate about it,” I said encouragingly.

He scratched his head, while his lips kept rehearsing silently the words which he was framing in his mind.

“Well, ‘tis this way. Men going to be executed, whether they are to be hung or shot, can foretell the result of any big race that’s going to be run shortly after their death. And now I want you to tell me what’s going to win the big race next week?”

(5)

I stood facing the three officers who constituted the court-martial. They were all extremely young men and all three were frowning with pompous ferocity, as though to impress all whom it might concern with the awful solemnity of the rôle they were playing. Behind the three judges stood three soldiers with fixed bayonets, rigidly immobile.

The president of the court, after examining intently a sheet of paper which lay on the table before him, addressed me at length in a heavily hollow voice.

“You will help us in bringing this unpleasant task to an end as speedily as possible if you will plead guilty forthwith to the charges against you, of which we have such adequate proof that this court-martial is in reality just a matter of form. In fact it’s a farce. The charges are—oh yes, let me see—they are: (a) that you are a sub-editor on the enemy press—to wit, the *Freeman’s Journal*, and consequently, in accordance with a recent decree of the I.R.A., liable to be shot at sight;

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(b) that you are down here spying for Mick Collins and the Staters; and (c) that you were fighting on the side of the British during Easter Week. Now you had better plead guilty at once to all these charges."

"And if I plead guilty to these charges, what will happen to me?" I said, assuming a sang-froid which indeed I was very far from feeling.

"You will be shot out of hand."

"Well, I'm not going to plead guilty to two of these charges, simply because they are false, while the third charge I can justify."

"Which is that?"

"The charge that I was fighting on the side of the British during Easter Week. That is true, but it must be remembered that I happened to be in Dublin when the rebellion broke out, and was let in for that very unpalatable job. I had joined the British army in obedience to the call of John Redmond, who told us that we were fighting for small nationalities—including Ireland. After all, fifty thousand Irishmen died for that ideal in Belgium, France and Gallipoli. It was just by luck that I was not one of that number."

"Very well, I propose that we acquit him on that charge," said the president of the court, looking towards his comrades, who nodded assent. "Now what about the charge that you were a sub-editor on the enemy Press?"

"I was a sub-editor on the *Freeman's Journal*," I replied, "but I have been a reporter for the past two months."

"Why did you become a reporter?"

"Because I was tired of the stuffiness of office life. And, if you remember, the reporters are immune from the proscription against journalists on the *Freeman's Journal*."

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"What proof have we that you have been transferred to the reporting staff?"

"Here is a letter from Mr. Hooper, the editor, informing me of my transfer."

The president scrutinised the letter. "This looks genuine enough," he said after a little, as he passed on the letter to his colleagues.

"O.K. boys—isn't it?" he said.

They both nodded.

"Very good, You're acquitted on that charge too. But here's a charge now to which you should plead guilty right away to save us any unnecessary bother. Now if you plead guilty to it, we shall allow you sufficient time to write any letters you wish to your relatives, but none to the press, of course. If, on the other hand, you refuse to plead guilty, you will be shot immediately after the priest has heard your confession."

"Well, what is the charge? There have been so many that I am quite confused."

"You came here to spy for the Staters."

"That is untrue."

"You were in council with Mick Collins the night before you left Dublin in the room of the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* and you were discussing the orders Mick got from Galloper Smith and Churchill to attack the Four Courts. The whole thing was planned in the Irish Club in London, with the help of Sam Geddes, the Carsonite Covenanter—a friend of yours."

A sudden chill struck at my heart. For the first time since my arrest I felt really anxious. A chain of horrible fortuitous coincidences was being wound round me. It was only too obvious that my meeting with Collins in Paddy Hooper's room had been reported by some spy in the employ of the firm to the Republicans. I remembered that reporters, compositors, office-boys and

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press photographers had been passing in and out of the room while we were chatting, and a very garbled account of our conversation had been reported. I thought hard for a moment, and then decided that a certain amount of *suppressio veri* would be necessary in answering the questions put to me. As I was not on oath, *suppressio veri* would not be perjury.

"Yes, I met Mr. Collins in the editor's room," I replied. "But our meeting was purely fortuitous."

"What was he doing there?"

"I've no idea. He was chatting with the editor about mutual old friends in London when I dropped in."

"And what did he speak to you about?"

"Also about old friends in London."

"Can you recall the names of any of them?"

"Oh yes. We talked about Lord Birkenhead whom Mr. Collins had introduced to me one night in the Irish Club."

"You admit that you were talking about Galloper Smith?"

"Yes."

"What about?"

"We were talking about the night when he introduced me in the Irish Club to Lord Birkenhead—or Galloper Smith, as you call him."

"You're telling lies," said the president with cold sarcasm. "You were discussing about the attack on the Four Courts which Mick was planning at the orders of Galloper and Churchill. Some of our boys shadowed Mick at the Irish Club and heard Galloper telling him to attack the Four Courts."

"It's news to me that Mr. Collins accepted any orders from Lord Birkenhead and Churchill," I replied with a smile, "and even if such were the case, Mr. Collins would hardly have discussed the matter with me. I'm

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rather flattered by the suggestion that Mr. Collins would consult an anonymous journalist on matters of State."

"There's no use fooling any more about the matter," snapped the president irritably. "You are only too well aware that after Sir Henry Wilson was shot in London Mick got orders from Galloper and Co. to clear the Republicans out of the Four Courts, or otherwise they would revoke the Treaty. 'Twas all planned in Sam Geddes's Irish Club—or rather, Irish pub, and yourself and Mick were talking about it in the *Freeman* office."

"I never heard of such orders—and needless to say, if they were issued I would not have been consulted about the crisis by Mr. Collins, as I have already pointed out to you. He might have told the *editor* privately about it. In my opinion, and it's merely an opinion, mind you, Mr. Collins decided to attack the Four Courts owing to the kidnapping by the Republicans of General O'Connell. And with regard to the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson, this is the first I have heard of it."

"Mick would never have attacked the Four Courts owing to the kidnapping of Ginger O'Connell," shouted the president, now thoroughly worked up. "He had decided to attack the Four Courts at Galloper's orders, which were given to him in the Irish Club in London, and sent you down here to spy out the strength of the Republicans. And you have let him know our strength—or rather our weakness, and that is why he has passed the wink to the Galway garrison to attack us. They're on their way now, thanks to your spying, but you won't get away with it."

I made no answer, but started to think as hard as I could. Things looked black against me—very black indeed. I was innocent of deliberate spying for the Free

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State Government, but for all that, they might construe my enquiries in my capacity as a reporter into spying.

One would imagine that the president of the court had followed the trend of my fevered thoughts.

"Under cover of reporting for your paper, which is the enemy's organ, you have been spying on us," he said, emphasising his words by banging his clenched fist on the table. "If you had done so before Mick had attacked the Four Courts we would not find any fault with your conduct. A reporter sending reports to his newspaper in peace-time—even if that paper is an enemy paper—is not a spy. But now there is war between us and the Staters."

Like a drowning man I clutched at a straw.

"When I left Dublin I never had the faintest idea that Mr. Collins was going to attack the Four Courts. Therefore I came down here in my rôle as a reporter—not as a spy, as you insist."

A quick look passed between the president and his two colleagues. Then there was a long pause before any further questions were shot at me. During that pause, the president's eyes were levelled on me. I saw a distinctly sadistic gleam in them. He was out for my blood. That was clear.

"We shall prove presently that you are a spy. Now listen to me very carefully. We have definite proof that the tinker's daughter at whose house you were arrested to-day is in the pay of the Staters, and you went to her to get the information about us, for which she receives her weekly allowance of one pound per week. Now will you plead guilty?"

"No—certainly not. And let me tell you now that Mrs. Boyd-Brown is not a paid spy for the Free State Government. The pound a week she gets is a sort of eleemosynary grant allowed to her by—"

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Again the president's heavy fist came down on the table.

"Oh, we know that old yarn about the jackass that was killed by a shell from the *O'Murachoo* at the battle of Rathnacopall. But that's all a blind. Rosanna Donnellan, as we all know her, or Mrs. Boyd-Brown as you call her, gets that pound a week for spying. We'd shoot her for her treachery only that she is expecting another child soon. She may thank God we're humane. But we have her under observation, and any man seen talking to her will get what's coming to you now in a few minutes. Old Darby the Drouth is digging a grave this minute in the back garden for himself and another tinker and you."

"So it seems that you had already passed sentence on me before this alleged court-martial," I said bitterly.

"What do you mean by alleged court-martial?"

"A court-martial at which you won't listen to a word in defence of the accused."

"You can say anything you like in your defence, but I warn you that it won't be any use."

"Then I won't say anything beyond telling you that your court-martial is a mere sham, and that you are out for cold-blooded murder under the guise of martial law."

"Murder? Murder?" roared the president.

"This sort of ballyragging won't get us anywhere," interposed the officer at his right irritably, digging the president unceremoniously in the ribs. "Why not ask the accused what his business was with the tinker's daughter if he wasn't spying."

"Begob, yes," said the president, calming down somewhat. "Now, look here, that young widow, the tinker's daughter, isn't your class, and what would you be doing with the likes of her but spying? Come now,

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answer me that? Of course, she's a fine handsome lump of a mountainy girl, and——”

“Mrs. Donnellan, the wife of Darby Donnellan the tinker, and the mother of Rosanna Boyd-Brown, was my old nurse. Whenever I return to Boynmore I always call to see her. She lives with her daughter.”

“How can you expect us to believe that yarn? It's too thin altogether.”

“Send for Rosanna and her mother.”

“We've no more time for all this codology. The Staters are on their way from Galway this minute. Maybe they're crossing Glencree bridge at the double this minute.”

“Well, call in the tinker himself,” I suggested, tickled despite the grimness of my position, by the macabre humour of the whole thing. “I know he's busy digging his grave at the moment, but he won't mind——”

“Darby the Drouth is shot by now,” said the officer on the right of the president.

“He's not shot yet, because I'm going to be present at the execution and slip a couple into him,” said the president. “I've given orders about it. I'm to be sent for. All right. We'll hear what Darby has to say. Bring in Darby the——”

His speech was cut short by the abrupt entrance into the court of a man in motor-cycling garb who gasped in broken snatches:

“Commandant—Commandant—the Staters is coming at the double along the Lagan road. They're within ten miles of the town. And they've artillery—bags of it. The artillery they got from the bloody British.”

“Cripes,” gasped the president of the court-martial. “How many of them are in it?”

“I didn't wait to count them, but I think there's about a thousand of them.”

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"Oh, begob then we must hook it at once. Tell the sergeant-major that he is to fall in all the men outside the barrack door—and see that the safety-catches and cut-offs are O.K. Half these lads don't know the first thing about a rifle. Where's that blasted despatch-rider that brought us the good news?"

"Here, Commandant," replied the dust-grimed man, coming to the salute.

"Hop out and see what's going on in the garden, and be quick about it. We haven't a minute to lose."

The president then turned to me again.

"You're in bad luck, I'm afraid. We haven't time to go any further into your case now, but we'll finish it off, and you too—at our first halt. We have to shoot your evidence too, unfortunately for you. We can't afford to take Darby with us. He always escaped from everyone that ever nabbed him."

"What about holding on to the prisoner until we can get in touch with the widow Boyd-Brown and her mother?" said the president's right-hand colleague.

"Ay, I suppose that's the only thing to do," mumbled the president sullenly. "It means that we'll have to yank this *Freeman's Journal* spy around the country with us. It's handling dynamite—so it is. If he escapes——"

"Commandant, Father Tom has heard Hoke the Spud's confession, but I stopped him just when he was going to hear Darby. I said there wasn't time."

"That's right. Is the firing-party drawn up?"

"Father Tom says you can't shoot Darby until he has heard his confession," said the sergeant-major.

"That means we must lug him along too, I suppose," snapped the president. "Well, clear out the whole bunch of ye into the street. I'll be with you in a minute. I'm off to the garden to see Hoke the Spud plugged."

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(6)

The Republican garrison of Boynmore was drawn up in front of the barracks, waiting for the Commandant to give the signal for starting, as soon as he had superintended the execution of Hoke the Spud.

Suddenly a volley of rifle-fire, followed by a couple of isolated shots, rang out. A few minutes later the sergeant-major staggered through the front door of the barracks into the street looking as white as a sheet.

“What’s up?” gasped the adjutant.

“The Commandant’s killed!” faltered the sergeant-major almost inaudibly.

“Killed? What do you mean?”

“Oh, Captain, I can’t—’twas horrible. The lid of his poll was blew clean off. He’s still kicking, and his brains lepping out of him like a seal-spit. Oh! Holy Mother of God!”

“Come on. Be a man—not an old woman,” said the Captain sternly. “How did it happen? Pull yourself together.”

“The Commandant had just slipped one into Hoke the Spud after the firing party had done their job,” the sergeant-major went on in a voice broken with convulsive gasps, “when one of the firing-party accidentally let off another bullet which blew the brains clean out of the Commandant, and then somebody else accidentally let off another and killed Shemus O’Grady.”

“Well, it can’t be helped, Tumble the three of them into the grave—’twas meant for three anyhow, and level out the ground and follow us like hell—we can’t wait. The Staters are nearly on top of us, thanks to that *Freeman’s Journal* spying bastard.”

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(7)

"Cripes! See where they put us," said Darby Donnellan to me as we marched along twenty yards ahead of the retreating Republican army. "We are here to draw the fire of the Staters, so that the lads behind us can jump into the ditches if they're put to it."

"Yes," I replied, "we're a sort of advance guard for them."

"And, begob, we run a double danger," said Darby Donnellan. "A lot of them clowns behind us is such rotten shots that mebbe we'd get the bullets they fire at the Staters. But do you know what? And us to make a jump for it, and us coming round a bend somewhere we might get away before they had done thumbing their safety-catches and cut-offs, the clumsy gubawns. And if they shoot us itself and us running, it'll be only a case of getting it in the arse instead of the neck, as we are for it anyways. First halt we'll be plugged."

"Don't shout so loud, Darby," I whispered. "Even though we are a good bit ahead of them, you may be sure they are keeping a sharp eye on us."

"They'd never hear us and us so far away," said Darby. "But fearing they might catch a word, I was thinking 'twouldn't be a bad idea and us to talk in Irish. Most of them gossoons have either no Irish at all, or else only Christian Brothers' or schoolmaster's Irish, or Munster Irish, that's worse again. Have you the Mayo Irish on you? *Thigan thu Gaedilge?*"

"*Thigam.*"

Whereupon Darby proceeded to explain in Irish his plan of campaign. He pointed out that when we arrived at Drummin, about a mile ahead, where the main road bifurcated into Bohernamuc and Bohernabo, the Republican troops would deploy into either of these

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byways. There was no third route. As both the byways curved inwards like the arms of an anchor of which the main road was the shank, he suggested that when we reached the apex of the shank, and immediately after the order was given to "right wheel" or "left wheel," we should act in direct opposition to the particular order given. Once round the bend we could make a dash into the woods, skirting both Bohernamuc and Bohernabo. If we did not get away with it we would pretend that we had misunderstood the order.

It seemed to me a pretty desperate venture, but I decided to chance it rather than act as a decoy bird for the Free State troops. Furthermore I knew that my chance of acquittal would be dubious enough at the resumption of the court-martial, even though the sadistic president of the recent court was now tucked away with Hoke the Spud and O'Grady under the clay of the garden at the rear of Boynmore barracks.

"The Staters has cannon, too, to make it worse," Darby resumed after we had stepped out for a while in silence. "I once got a slap of a cannon-ball in the butt of the belly from the *O'Murachoo*, of the Free State navy. It near ripped the guts out of me. The devil a lie and you know it. You were there at the time so there's no need for me to tell you any more about it. What are you laughing at?"

"My dear old Darby," I said, "if you were hit by a cannon-ball—a shell, you mean, of course—you'd never know it. Both you and the cannon-ball would go to pieces at the same moment."

"'Twas a cannon-ball like a boost¹ potato or a rotten turnip, a soft cannon-ball with all the insides rotted or rusted out of it. Oh, begob, we're only a hundred yards now from the turn of the road into the two bohreens.

¹ Gaelic. "Decayed."

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When we get there we'll run like hell after the order is given and make a dart across the ditch into the wood."

"At the double," rang out an order, repeated by some N.C.O.'s.

"That just suits us," said Darby, as we fell into a jog trot. "Them lads is windy."

In a couple of minutes we had reached the bend. "Right wheel" came the order. Promptly Darby and myself wheeled to the left by the Bohernamuc route. To our dismay we discovered, on giving a fleeting glance over our shoulders, that about half the vanguard wheeled left also. The other half wheeled right in response to the order. Simultaneously the men who had taken the wrong turn retraced their steps precipitately, cannonading as they did so into the outward file of the main body as it was making its convex detour of the corner at the double.

"Jump," said Darby, suiting the action to the word. I followed him.

"Some of you bloody bastards don't know your right from your left," were the last words we heard as we plunged into the wood.

A minute later a scattered fusillade of rifle-fire started. We ran as hard as we could, while bullets whizzed and wailed through the foliage or sunk with a dull plop into the tree-trunks.

"Run like blue blazes," panted Darby.
I did.

CHAPTER XII

GREEN HILLS

(1)

As the old Irish jaunting-car rocked crazily along the uneven streets of Boynmore, the exile scanned the faces of the few people who loafed round the pump and at the door of the blacksmith's forge, vaguely hoping that he would see someone whom he would recognise. A vain quest. Even the weather-beaten old driver, apparently a sexagenarian like himself, had greeted him courteously, but blankly.

And yet what did he expect? Had he not left the neighbourhood fifty years ago, when he was only twelve? If he wished people to remember him, he should have bridged the years by occasional trips to Ireland. But he had not even kept in touch with his fellow-exiles in America. Temperamentally he had nothing in common during his youth and prime with the truculent tribalism, the brooding over past wrongs, and the implacable hate of the Saxon which seemed to be the eternal obsession of his fellow-exiles, and they cold-shouldered him in consequence. The breach between him and them widened with the years.

Passionately devoted to landscape-painting, he had, after a bitter struggle during his early years, acquired fame and wealth in his art at middle-age, but he had never been a success socially. He was too sensitive, too shy. People mistook his sensitiveness and shyness for

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snobbery and cynicism, and shunned him. And then, as he was verging towards the sixties, the craze for ultra-modern tendencies in painting puzzled him at first, and finished by exasperating him. He felt that he was outmoded; that he was a back number; that he had better retire.

He would return to his native village, Ardnaree, get a little plot of land and a cottage there, and spend the evening of his days among the kindly, warm-hearted people of that beautiful little spot. Nobody there would remember him off-hand, but he would jog their memories, and with the aid of a few old people there he would restore the links with the past.

He regretted now that he had not tried many years before to keep in touch with Ardnaree. But, after all, had he not written to his uncle James thirty years before, and had not the letter been returned, marked "Not known"? His uncle had taken over the ancestral holding and cottage when his father and mother had decided to try their fortune in America fifty years ago. The poignant bitterness of that parting scene was indelibly engraved in his memory. His uncle James had begged his father not to go, and his mother had joined in the appeal. America was a cold, hard land, James said, and Yanks came home boasting, with one good suit and a gold-plated watch-chain you could hang a dog with; Yanks that bragged about the streets of New York being paved with gold; Yanks who got drunk and told lies in public-houses. Were they not happy where they were, snug under the shadow of Croagh Patrick? said his mother. They were poor; everyone around them was poor, but was not our Blessed Lord poor while on earth too? And then his father got angry, and said he was not going to waste his life trying to pay a rack-rent to alien and absentee landlords. If James was fool enough to

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do it, let him, but if he had sense, he would go, too, to the land of the free and leave the holding to the graziers and the grabbers. If he stayed—well, one bad harvest and the bailiffs would come with their battering-rams.

And then there was the American wake. All the neighbours dancing and singing the whole night long on the eve of their departure from Boynmore station. And the whole village—men, women and children—crying as the train steamed out, and praying for God's blessing on them, and praying, too, that Lord Boynmore and his agent would get their dues at the end of a shot-gun, come that day twelve months, at the very latest.

His mother had died shortly after her arrival in New York. He was firmly convinced that she died of *heimweh*—the nostalgia for Erin. A few days before her death she begged her husband to try to make enough money to return to Ireland and bring up their child in an Irish atmosphere. His father, overwhelmed with anguish, had promised to do his best, and she died happy. Obsessed by the conviction that he had broken her heart by forcing her to come to America, his father only survived her a few weeks.

And now, after all these years, here he was jogging along on this swaying old jaunting-car to his native village. And with every jolt of the crazy vehicle memories of his childhood came surging before his mind. Incidents that happen at the age of twelve remain indelibly limned on the memory of an ageing man, while events of the middle years become blurred. And how often amid the stress and fever of his active years in New York did the everyday happenings and little outstanding adventures of his childhood swell up before him, dimming his eyes with tears! The kindly old parish

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priest organising races for youngsters on the sands of Carramore for the coveted prize of sixpence, the dancing at the cross-roads, the joys of blackberrying time, the sugar-sticks and toys his gentle mother bought for him always when they sold bullocks or pigs at the fair, the fairy tales told by the blazing turf fires in winter—these and a host of other happy memories flashed and re-flashed like the facets of a multicoloured kaleidoscope before his mental vision.

And yet, he reflected, as the old car see-sawed its way along the shores of Clew Bay, that, despite the inner voice ever calling him back to Erin, he had again and again postponed the voyage—so reluctant are elderly folk to change habits and habitation. And then a trivial circumstance brought about his final decision. One night at a vaudeville entertainment he heard a blowsy bawd singing a treacly ditty—the composition of a New York Hebrew—about an old Irish mother waiting for her exiled son in a lonely Mayo cottage. When he got home he read and re-read Yeats's "Innisfree" and Horace's "Beatus Ille" until he fell asleep. And next morning he booked his passage for Ireland.

(2)

They had rounded a bend of Clew Bay. Before them on a long, rocky spur stood the bare, blackened gables of what looked like a long, one-storeyed bungalow, silhouetted against the sky-line.

"I say! wasn't that a coastguard station, as well as I can recollect?"

The driver grunted, and jerked the reins, throwing his stocky mare back on her haunches.

"'Twas that, and 'twas burned down by the I.R.A. in the fight against the British. And there beyond in the

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clump of trees to your left is the R.I.C. barracks; the boys done for that too."

"There was a fine belt of trees, sturdy old sycamores, lining the road from Boynmore right on to Kildangan. Oh! but that's fifty years ago. Maybe they died of old age."

"They did not, then, die of old age. The boys cut a lot of them for barricades to bother the Black-and-Tans, and then when the Civil War broke out the Republican troops cut down more of them for barricades to stop the Free State soldiers. And down there in the valley at Bunree is the ruins of Lord Boynmore's Castle. The Republicans burned that down, because Lord Boynmore was siding with the Free Staters—and why wouldn't he, and Mick Collins guaranteeing him and his breed the land-purchase annuities, and the more betoken Mick got the bullet himself in the gap of Beal-na-Bla. They're a grasping, dirty lot them Staters, worse than Corkmen."

He jerked the left rein, and the mare, after abortive efforts to kick the car to pieces, turned up a road leading inland. Simultaneously a hail of blows descended on the poor brute.

"Thonam an diaoul! Will you go out of that, you dirty old bitch, or I'll break every bone in your body? The curse of Cromwell on you!"

"Would you mind turning back again and going by the sea road? I want to see that quaint old hump-backed, ivy-clad bridge where the Owenbeg flows into Clew Bay."

"Well, you won't see it no more. The Republican soldiers sent it sky high a year ago to prevent the Staters from getting to Ardnaree. At any rate it was no loss, and they're building a grand red, flat, steel bridge instead of it now. A bloody nuisance that same old

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humpy-backed bridge was. A devil's climb for a mare to cross it, and then you never knew what you'd meet the other side of it. Didn't I run into Darby Donnellan the tinker's ass and cart one night at the bloody bridge —him flaming drunk and all? And didn't he take the law of me and get six pounds damages, and in a Free State court too, begob. The British couldn't have done worse. Oh! be the hokey-pokey! Here's Thomas Mike O'Malley coming across the bog for a gawsther."

A lean, tall man in corduroys was lurching across the bog to the roadside.

"Dia Guth, Mikileen asthore!" he said at the same time doffing his battered quasi-clerical hat and bowing courteously towards the stranger.

"Dia as Muire guth, Thomasheen avic! God bless the work! And how's the turf doing? Grand weather for drying it, isn't it?"

"'Tis that, glory be to God! 'Tisn't that bothers me, but the health is poorly with me."

"Arrah! mavrone asthore! And 'tis sorry I am to hear that, Thomasheen. And well you know that, avic machree! But mebbe it's only a colic or a brash, or something the likes of that."

"Mickeen agrah, I'm afeard 'tis grinning up at the daisies I'll be before Christmas, and the best I can do is to try and make my soul. Didn't I hear the banshee last night, Mickeen?"

"Arrah! go on out of that! 'Tis dreaming ye were."

"That I may be struck stone stiff dead on the spot if I didn't. A long, lonesome cry like a howling dog—only more long drawn out and wilder and colder."

"Now, mebbe 'twas a philibeen you heard. 'Tis a lonesome cry like a banshee's. Or mebbe 'twas a lot of gulls screechin' after the shoal of herrings in the bay. Myself once didn't I mistake the screech of a flock of

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gulls for the banshee, and wasn't I that frightened I was going to send for the priest. To take to my bed I did for two days, and I went that yellow in the face that herself gave me up, and if she didn't go down to Patsy Murphy, the gombeen man, to see about pipes and tobacco and a sup of drink for the wake, in case I took a turn for the worst, of course. Well, we all have to go in God's holy time, and the devil a minute before or after. So keep up the old heart, Thomasheen avic. Here, Thomasheen, jump up on the old car, and let us have a drop at Campbell's. 'Tis just on the way, as I'm driving this gentleman to the Clew Bay Hotel."

"No, Mickeen asthore. I have to clamp all this turf before night, in case the weather would break. Thanks all the same, Mickeen, and sure you have a heart as big as a cow's. Slan lath, avic."

And after another courteous sweep of his battered hat to the stranger, he turned his back, and lurched heavily through the squelching bog back to his work.

The driver jerked the reins savagely.

The mare staggered back a dozen paces, and then bounded forward in a frantic gallop, while the heavy cart-whip whistled through the air again and again, and belaboured her smoking flanks.

"Will you go on out of that, you dirty old sow? Campbell's will be closed before we get there, and my throat is like a limekiln with the drought, talking to that mean old codger who never in his lifetime asked a man if he had a mouth on him. Not that he wouldn't drink all he got for nothing. He has a belly on him like a gombeen-man's pocket—no bottom to it."

The mare dropped to a canter. The driver leaned over the wall of the car and tapped his fare on the shoulder.

"Your honour would never guess what brought that

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dirty old miser crawling across the bog to me. Well, I'll tell you. He knows that I have a worm, and that I brew a drop of the best poteen in Mayo, and he thought that him making a poor mouth about his health, that it's how I'd give him a quart or so for nothing. I'd see him scorching on the hot hobs of hell first, the mean dirty blackguard that would follow the crows a mile for a potato."

"Oh! you make poteen, do you?"

"Well, your honour, just a sup on the unknownst. 'Tis an old secret handed down in our family from father to son, and the brew is as mild as mother's milk. Often the ban fassa, that's the handywoman, old Maura McGrail, comes to me for a sup of it to cure a new-born child of the convulsions. The people round here calls it Saint Patrick's eye-water—that'll show you how mild it is. There's some says that the secret goes back to the time of Saint Patrick, and that he was the first to brew it on the top of the holy mountain beyond."

He pointed with this whip towards the conical peak of Croagh Patrick, towering majestically over the range of the Connemara mountains. Then he bent over closer towards his fare.

"If your honour would like a bottle or two, I'd let you have it dirt cheap," he said in a confidential whisper.

"Thanks, I've tasted crude, home-brewed rye-whiskey once in America, and would not care to sample it a second time."

"Mebbe you'd sooner a good pint. Well, they have tapped a new barrel at Campbell's to-day, and bedad, it's that strong you could trot a young mare on the froth of it. Will we stop there—it's on our way, your honour?"

"No, thank you."

Chagrined by this snub, the driver vented his pique

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by flogging with renewed viciousness his wretched mare, which had for some time been taking the road at a steady trot.

“Please don’t flog that poor brute so unmercifully.”

“Well, saving your honour’s presence, I wouldn’t hurt a fly, so I wouldn’t, but I always found that a skelp of the stick was always good for keeping mares and gosoors in order. Spare the rod and spoil the child. And do you know what? The Free Staters is worse than the British ever was with their codology about cruelty to animals. They won’t let the gosoors rob a bird’s nest, and you can’t bite off the tail of your own pup, you must get the vet to operate on him, moryah, and the Civic Guards has Darby Donnellan, the tinker, up next week for tying two asses tail to tail, and sending them kicking through the square of Ardnaree. And I’m told the Government is bringing in a law to prevent the Dublin jackeens chasing wild geese with aeroplanes. Oh, bedad, who’s this tearing along in his motor-car? ‘Tis Michael Joe O’Malley. Dia guth, Michaeleen asthore. How is the kelp going, my old son?”

“Great, avic,” came the retort as the motor shot by.

“That’s another of the dirty breed of the O’Malleys, another miser, too, like the old codger we met a few minutes ago, Thomasheen O’Malley. The parish is crawling with O’Malleys, all spiteful, mean, begrudging Free Staters—every mother’s son of them.”

“My own name is O’Malley—Conor O’Malley. I’m a son of the late Shawn O’Malley Shawn Mor, a native of this parish, who died in America. I am very probably a kinsman of both those people to whom you have been speaking.”

Another violent jerk at the reins, followed by staccato rearguard action and side-stepping by the mare, and a tornado of blows from her owner.

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"Will you go on out of that when I tell you, you lazy old scarecrow? And so you are a son of Shawn O'Malley Shawn Mor? I was only a bit of a gossoon when he went to America, but I'm told he was held in the greatest respect by every man in New York. And, even if there are some dirty, begrudging Free Staters itself of the name of O'Malley in this parish, sure the O'Malleys of the old stock were a great clan, the descendants of the Great Granuaille, the queen of men that beat the devil out of bloody Queen Bess, and trounced her up and down the waters of Clew Bay with her fleet of hookers. Look at the ruins of her castle over there. You can see it across Clew Bay over there in Clare Island—a grand monument to a great queen—God rest her soul! And it's from Granuaille's stock your honour comes, I'll be bound."

"I say, driver, pull up here. I'm going to take a stroll down this bohreen to the left, and you can go on to the Clew Bay Hotel, and hand my portmanteau to Mr. McGirr, and tell him I shall be along in a couple of hours."

(3)

As he walked along the winding bohreen that led round the bend of the hill, on the other side of which lay the village, which he had last seen at the age of twelve, but every beloved detail of which was indelibly engraved on the retentive memory of childhood, the flood of nostalgia for his home, the home of his dead father and mother, welled up again.

On either side of him lay the wild primeval bogland, every conceivable shade of green patterned on a purplish brown background and rich with a thousand blended aromatic odours. Meadowsweet, foxglove, marguerites,

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ferns, harebells, luscious wild orchids of many hues, and the soft white down of the bogcotton, or, as he preferred to call it by its sweet old Irish name, "cannabawn," were richly sprinkled amid the fragrant bog-grass and rushes. The flora that had danced before his mental vision on lonely nights in America now bloomed in soft luxuriance before his eyes. The August breeze, sweet with blended perfumes, crooned softly through the rushes, punctuated by the gentle caesura of the waves of Clew Bay, mellowed through the medium of the intervening fields.

A yellowhammer, sturdy little warbler during a month when other birds are mute, trilled gaily in a furze bush. He remembered how, near that very spot, when he was about ten, he had caught a fledgling yellowhammer. Though he had held it ever so gently in the hollow of his hands, it had quivered and throbbed with terror. His mother had made him set it free. How he had cried as if his heart would break as he saw it soar away! How bitter are the tears of childhood, how real are its sorrows!

The faint cadences of the *Angelus* from the parish church, two miles away, gently broke in on his day-dream. He paused, removed his hat, and recited that prayer—most tender, most human of prayers. As he prayed there ran through his subconsciousness memories of the "Adeste Fideles," sung by the village choir on Christmas morning with more vigour than virtuosity, and of the nightly recital of the Rosary by the blazing turf fire in the little kitchen in Ardnaree. In a few minutes he would be knocking at the door of his father's old home—he would introduce himself to its present tenant, and ask permission to gaze once more, after the lapse of half a century, on the hearth associated with so many tender memories.

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That numb, aching void of the spirit that broods over the ageing man who is landless, homeless, wifeless, loveless, childless, was gone. The age-lag in his legs was gone too, and he stepped briskly forward with the elasticity of twenty. He was now within a hundred yards of the turn on the shoulder of the hill which would reveal to his gaze once more the green slopes of Ardnaree with its twenty-five whitewashed golden-thatched cottages nestling snugly along a fair sweep of waving corn lands, verdant pastures, and trim potato fields. He would close his eyes until he had turned the corner, and then open them on the full panorama of that loved landscape.

He tip-tapped with his stick along the roadside, until he came to the bend. Then he opened his eyes.

“Oh, my God!” he groaned in an agony of misery.

(4)

One large, ugly, squat farmhouse and some score of roofless, moss-covered, gaunt, ruined cottages were islanded on the slopes of Ardnaree. The entire hillside seemed given over to grazing—the fields were over-stocked—dotted with sleek, black, hornless, Aberdeen cattle, and on the higher and more arid reaches were sheep. A rancid animal reek, more redolent of lairages than of idylls, soured the air, and a discordant blend of bellowings and bleatings grated harshly on the ear. Save for a patch of potatoes, whose holms were waging a losing battle against an encroaching army of rank weeds, there was no trace of human activity. It looked as though the brute had ousted man completely from the little cosmos of Ardnaree.

Mentally numb, he turned mechanically up the path

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leading to the home of his childhood. He had been fully prepared to meet the blank faces of indifferent natives, but he had never dreamt that he would see such grim desolation. And yet, what a fool he had been! Had he kept in touch with political and economic developments in Ireland during half a century, he might have expected this. Agricultural depression, the reaction of the repeal of the corn laws, rack rents, evictions, the opening-up of colossal farms and ranches in virgin countries—all these factors had contributed to the process of installing oxen in the homes of happy peasants. Had he even looked at the daily papers from time to time he would have read about the homesteads and villages that had been levelled by battering-rams. But then, he had always regarded with contempt the flag-wagging, red-ragging, hair-raising crudities of the yellow press. An epigram from *The Times*, which the late Pat Ford had quoted *ad nauseam* in heavy type in the *Irish World*, flashed across his mind: "The Celts were going—going with a vengeance—and soon it would be as rare a sight to see an Irishman on the banks of the Shannon as to see a Red Indian on the banks of the Mississippi." The Celts were not going—they were gone!

He was standing at the narrow doorway of his ruined home. A giant rag-wort sprang from its threshold and barred the entrance. Its fading yellow flowers, some of which had already merged into a dirty downy seed, that was wafted hither and thither by the breeze, stared at him evilly like the rheumy eyes of drunken dotards. Its rank odour impinged on his nostrils. Petulantly he grabbed it near the base, but it resisted all his efforts. Its roots were firmly embedded beneath the moss-grown lintel. A swarm of fat flies emerged from its fetid foliage and encircled him angrily.

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“Them bookalawns has the place ruined.”

Startled, he turned round and confronted a weasel-faced man of about seventy.

“I’m the tenant of this land, and, do what I can, I cannot keep my farm clean of bookalawns. You see, your honour, them dirty blackguards in the valley beyond never pulled up their bookalawns last year, just to spite the Government, although they know that bookalawns is poison to the stock. They are all mad-hot Republicans, always bragging about De Valera being the bravest and most extinguished leader Ireland ever had, and, just because the Free State Government gives an order, they disobey it. And then the seed is carried by the wind from their dirty farms to mine. I’d put fines on every one of them, your honour. There is thirty of them in all, and I’ll give you their names—only, for God’s sake, don’t let on I told you.”

“I think you are making a big mistake, my friend. What do you think I am?”

The old man stared, aghast.

“When I seen you pulling at the bookalawn, I thought you were an official of the Department.”

“I’m not an official of the Department. I have just come from America.”

“Oh! you’re a Yank. Well, then, I hope you’re on the side of the Free State. Most of the Yanks that comes back you couldn’t tell what they are—they’re like Lana Machree’s dog—going a bit of the way with everyone. If a Republican is standing them a pint it’s ‘Up De Valera!’ with them, and if——”

“I have never meddled in Irish politics in America.”

“Begob, then, you’ll have to take sides here, or you’ll find yourself knocked out of your soul-case some morning. And what might your name be, now?”

“Conor O’Malley.”

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“You wouldn’t be a son of Shawn O’Malley Shawn Mor, that died in America?”

“I am.”

The old man extended a grimy hand.

“Leave it there, my son. You’re a near friend of mine.”

“A near friend of yours?”

“You are a fourth cousin of mine. Come down to Campbell’s till I set you blind, roaring, paralatic drunk.”

Conor O’Malley smiled wryly.

“Thanks for your hospitable intention. Later on we shall have a drink, but I want a few words with you first. You are the owner of that big house over there—are you?”

“I am that.”

“And of all the lands of Ardnaree?”

The old man looked at him sourly for a moment through narrowed eye-slits.

“Ay. The tenants were evicted because they wouldn’t pay Lord Boynmore his lawful dues. I got their farms. People called me a grabber and a grazier, but——”

“That will do. I don’t care what people call you. Now, listen, I had intended spending the rest of my days in Boynmore, and getting a cottage and a plot of land, but——”

A rictus of rage convulsed the old farmer’s face.

“If you think you can claim back the farm that your spalpeen fanach of a father threw up under the Evicted Tenants Act—you—you—you——”

His voice trailed away in incoherent, frenzied gasping. His palsied, clay-like hands were outstretched with pathetic, futile menacings.

The aged exile gazed at him with a vague expression of blended curiosity and pity. Then his disillusioned eyes swept the soulless landscape.

“Don’t worry, I am returning to America.”

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(5)

But it had been written in the Book of Fate that Conor O'Malley would never return to America. Death stepped in.

Fuar se bas in Eirean,¹ in the conventional phrasing of the ancient Irish annals and legends.

The lonely, ageing man who was equally out of touch with young America and young Ireland, found rest in a grave in Old Ireland—the ageless, changeless Ireland.

Rosanna will tell you about his last days in the next chapter.

¹ Gaelic. "He found death in Erin."

CHAPTER XIII

THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER AND "THE RETURNED YANK"

ROSANNA built up a roaring fire of turf, and, sitting in the ingle-nook opposite me, began:

"You want to know how I met the returned Yank, is it? Well, he was just coming along the hill road from Kildangan to Boynmore, when my little Darby runs across to him with his hand stretched out. 'Thorum peèn,' says Darbeen. And the Yank gives him a shilling, and with that he looks up, and sees me nursing Maureen, and me sitting on a stone. 'Is that your child?' he says. 'Tis, God bless him,' says I. 'Amen to that,' says he, 'but you ought to know better than to let him go begging from strangers.' 'Tis in his blood to beg and to steal too, stranger,' says I. 'His great-grandfather's grandfather was hung forinst the public in Castlebar for sheep-stealing, and his——' and with that the Yank takes the word out of my mouth, and says he: 'Would you be the daughter of Darby Donnellan, who tried to make a Bolshevik republic in Boynmore?' 'I am that,' says I. 'And I see you are a knowledgeable man, stranger, that reads in the papers about all the terrible wars in Ireland. Me old da was always meddling in politics and in the wars in Ireland. When the Black-and-Tans was here he robbed mail-cars and banks for patriotism.' 'And what is he at now?' says the Yank. 'I don't know, stranger,' says I; 'mebbe he is hung, though if he was, I suppose we would hear of it, as all the penny poets would be

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singing about it at the fairs. Or mebbe he is in jail. But if he is not hanged or in jail, I'll bet he is mixed up in politics and robbery and mebbe making plans for another terrible war in Ireland.' ”

“Don't mind about your father, Rosanna,” I interrupted, “but let me hear how this old Irish-American, the late Mr. Conor O'Malley, came to take such an interest in you.”

“Well, he asked me how I was striving to make a living for myself and my children, and I told him about the small pension I had from the Staters for my ass was killed in the wars, and that I used to make baskets and cleaves out of sally-rods, and read fortunes. And then he asked me to read his fortune. And I told him he came across the big water. 'Twas easy to see that same, him being a returned Yank. And then I told him that he would never cross the big water again—that he would find death in Ireland. 'What?' says he, not frightened, but surprised like. 'Will it be soon?' says he. 'Soon and sudden,' says I, 'but with no pain.' 'Thank God for that,' says he. 'I was just going back to America, but now I won't.' 'Don't try to cross the sea, stranger,' says I, 'because, if you do, your dead body will be thrown into the wild waves by the captain of the ship to feed the sharks. Your soul would never have proper rest, and you to be eaten by sharks!' And then he says——”

“Rosanna, you've told me all that again and again,” I interposed. “What I want to know is how you managed to cast such a spell on Mr. Conor O'Malley that he left you all his money.”

Rosanna looked at me with a hurt expression.

“The sorra spell I put on him, agrah,” she answered in an aggrieved tone. “'Tis thinking I am that 'twas partly through pity for me and me being a widow with

Tinker's Daughter and "Returned Yank"

my orphans, and partly through loneliness, him having nobody in the world that cared for him, and partly by dint of him being rotten with money was no use to him, and partly through daftness that he left me his fortune. He said that he was a painter in America, but 'tis thinking I am that he only imagined it, because he had always queer notions and delusions. Anyways, he couldn't paint—only letting on he was, or mebbe thinking that he could paint. Well, he used to make me come to McGirr's hotel, and put me sitting on a high chair mebbe for an hour or two, as the notion struck him. Making me a model for a picture of Cleopatra, an old ancient queen of America, she was, he said. Well, he had a bad turn one day while he was painting, and he fell on the floor in a dead faint, and when he came to the doctor said he was not to do any more painting for a long time, as it was bad for his heart with the excitement it gave him. And it was small loss to him to give up that same painting, because the last I seen of it, it looked more like a street in Boynmore after a cattle fair than the picture of Cleopatra, the great queen of America."

"And so do you believe that he was only pretending to be a painter, Rosanna?" I asked.

"I do that. Often I do be thinking that mebbe he was ashamed to let on how he made all that money. It could be that he made it in the wars in America, robbing mail-cars and banks and public-houses the same as me old da done. Or it could be he made it backing horses or on cards."

"What makes you think that, Rosanna?" I asked.

"Well, 'tis funny, isn't it, that one day I told him that my ass-cart was badly in want of a coat of paint, as it never got a lick of the brush since the Tans left Ireland. And he ups and says that he would do it for me. Well, that ass-cart was the show of the world after him

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finishing the job. He didn't even know how to mix the paint, because it took days and days to dry, and then it dried in daubs and streaks, and there was blisters on it like bunions. I had to get it all scraped off and have it painted over again after the Yank was dead, by Patsy McGrail, the pig-blocker, who started trying to put the comether on me again on account of the money the Yank left me. But says I to Patsy, says I, after he done the job, 'Keep your soft silvery tongue, my bold pig-blocker, for twisting the prices for the pig-jobbers at the Christmas pig fairs in Ballina and Westport and Castlebar, and thanks for painting the ass-cart, and not wishing to be beholden to you I'm going to pay you now for the job, and be making yourself scarce.' 'Is that your thanks to me,' says he, 'for the grand coat of paint I done on your ass-cart?' 'I can pay you for the job,' says I. 'I'm a widow woman of substance.' 'You are that—a widow woman of substance,' says he with a sneer. 'There's a good stone more of substance in you than when you jilted me first for the tinker got the seat blew out of his pants by the Tans, and then for the poet whose skull was cracked by dint of a sow running between his legs during the wars. And it's heading for the makings of a stale girl you'd be by now if it wasn't for that same daft poet marrying you.' Well, with that I ups and I lets him have the bridle of the old ass across the dirty snot—again and again till his face was more like the Yank's picture of Cleopatra when I was done with him than it was like the face of a Christian. Well, he let one roar out of him that set the hens cackling and the cocks crowing and the pigs grunting for a mile round by dint of the fright, and he started calling on God and the police to save him from being murdered by a widow woman was more like a cross cow, he said, than a two-legged Christian."

Tinker's Daughter and "Returned Yank"

"Were you ever thinking of getting married again, Rosanna?" I asked banteringly.

"Now, I was that and, 'tis how I'm always thinking of it," she replied with a coquettish gleam in her eye. "If I got a fine upstanding man the likes of a school teacher or a Civic Guard or mebbe even the likes of yourself I wouldn't say that I mightn't think that mebbe it could be that I'd marry him. If I have two children itself, I have a thousand pounds to my back. But one thing I won't do. I won't marry no poet nor no pig-blocker."

CHAPTER XIV

THE TINKER AND THE "BASS" BATTLE

Three years later

"WELL, here you are, Rosanna, still a merry widow. And, mind you, I've kept my eye open looking for a suitable match for you and maybe I'll succeed yet. I understand you still refuse to have anything to do with poets or pig-blockers, isn't that so?"

"That's right, agrah. I wouldn't mind a peeler or a national school teacher itself, or anybody with steady money coming in. But poets makes very bad money. And talking about marriage, do you know I was very near marrying Bos-gan-soggart a week ago? You mind Bos-gan-soggart? He was the Black-and-Tan got that name ('death without the priest') by dint of all the lads he killed during the wars. He has a public-house now in Clashmore, you know."

"What—Bos-gan-soggart—the Black-and-Tan terror? Has he taken a public-house in Clashmore?"

"He has that."

"And did the people stand for that? How could he have the neck to do it?"

"Ah, well, agrah, I suppose it is that the Irish people is very forgiving, and forbye they have a great grah for a man who has courage and who fights fair. And Bos-gan-soggart, although he was a murdering scut, always done murder decent and clean. He never pulled young lads out of their beds in the dead of the night, and shot

The Tinker and the "Bass" Battle

them like dogs. He never hit barring when he was hit, and then he went mad before him."

"And when did you get this proposal from Bos-gan-soggarth, Rosanna?"

"'Twas after he gave me old da the larrup on the head that was the death of him."

"Oh, I heard about your poor father's death."

Rosanna gave a sardonic laugh.

"My poor father, is it? Bedad, he wasn't poor. His pockets were lined with pound notes and gold when they took him to the asylum. They said that he had all the gold in Ireland. He stole it before the war—I mean the war between England and Germany, not the war between the tinkers and the Staters, nor the Black-and-Tan war."

"Well, how did he fall foul of Bos-gan-soggarth, Rosanna?"

"'Twas in the wars between the Republicans and Bass. Me old da and some of the Clifden tinkers raided Jimmy McGloin's first, and smashed a couple of hundred bottles of Bass there and then loaded a dozen bottles and a full barrel of Bass on to their ass-carts. Well, they got blind paralatic drunk with all the Bass, and then me da says: 'Come on, boys, we'll raid Bos-gan-soggarth's pub and smash all the Bass we don't drink. And we'll abolish Bos-gan-soggarth himself—'tis a disgrace to have an English traitor getting fat on the blood of our people that he spilled in the wars, and then we'll abolish Father Tom O'Hara too, who is always on the side of the burjoisy, and then,' says he, 'we'll make short work of the Civic Guards. Ireland abool! Up the tinsmiths' soviet!' says me old da, and him mad with drink and patriotism. 'Ireland will never be free until we abolish and destroy all peelers, Black-and-Tans, Civic Guards and the black militia of Rome

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with Father Tom at their head. We'll murder Bos-gan-soggarth in his standing first, and then we'll load every sup of Bass in his house on to our ass-carts.' And with that they tore mad down the hill singing 'A Nation Once Again' and 'Soldiers are We!' and 'The Red Flag!' When they got to Bos-gan-soggarth's 'twas after closing time, and me old da at the head of the other blackguards raps on the door with the butt-end of his ass-cart whip and says: 'Come out, Bos-gan-soggarth,' says he, 'come out and give us the keys of the bar, because we won't have no foreign Saxon beer sold in the Island of Saints.' So Bos-gan-soggarth, he half-opens the door, and lets Darby have the contents of an old pot, savin' your presence, agrah, right in the dirty snot, and then slams the door in his face. So then me old da and the other tinkers makes a mad leap at the door and sends it flying before them, hinges and all. So Bos-gan-soggarth then and the tinkers bet other with fists and bottles, and in the end Bos-gan-soggarth won the war and threw them all out in the road. Well, then me old da picked up an old rusty scythe, and he comes for Bos-gan-soggarth and says, 'Come along, Bos-gan-soggarth, till I rip your soul-case open, and spill your guts on your own doorstep.' So Bos-gan-soggarth waited for him, and dodged the scythe, and then caught me old da such a larrup on the head with a bung-starter that he disremembered everything after that till his death. Bos-gan-soggarth split me old da's head open with that lick on the poll he gave him. Well, the doctor was away in the islands at the time, and they had to get a bone-setter to stitch up me old da's head, and 'tis thinking I am 'twas how he stitched a bit of his old hat into his brains on the unbeknownst, because ever after that me old da began to get simple in himself and to talk foolish and childlike until they sent him to Castlebar lunatic asylum

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where he died. And some of the lads made a grand song about him that he was a son of Granuaille, and died a martyr for Ireland to keep English beer out of the country and make the people drink Guinness's porter. But most people said he was nothing but a dirty drunken blackguard, and that he raided Bos-gan-soggarth's by dint of the drought and not by dint of patriotism. And yourself, now, agraah, would you be saying that me ould da was a holy martyr for Ireland and a patriot who wanted to drive English beer and the burjoisy out of the country?"

"Let the dead rest, Rosanna," I said diplomatically. "And, tell me now, when did you refuse Bos-gan-soggarth's offer of marriage, Rosanna?"

"'Twas just a week after the Derby. Me old da died on Derby Day."

"Oh, you refused him, of course, because he struck the blow that killed your father, And of course, too, because he killed your first lover, Dan Doogan, the tinker and poet."

"Indeed, that wasn't the why," came Rosanna's cynical retort. "I got over my grief for Daneen long ago, and me old da was asking for the clout that he got. I refused him because he wouldn't turn."

"Wouldn't turn! What—"

"Wouldn't turn a Catholic, of course. Is it the ways you've forgot your catechism by dint of living in foreign parts, agraah?"

"And why wouldn't he turn, Rosanna?"

"The sorra one of me knows, agraah. But mebbe he might turn yet."

"Are you sure, Rosanna, that it's not your money he's after?"

Rosanna sighed and a dreamy look came into her eyes.

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“It could be, agrah, but though it’s meself that says it, there’s many a man would be glad to have a fine young widow of thirty-four, the likes of me, even if I had only the shift on me back itself, and Bos-gan-soggarth often says he wishes I hadn’t a penny to me name, and when he sees me he’s always singing a grand song that he says the King and Queen of England and all the quality is always singing. I disremember it all now. ’Tis about a widow woman, and ’twould bring the tears to your eyes. I only mind the end of it:

‘I’d rather have you without any fortune,
Than the widow Brady with her ass and cart.’”

“I must say, Rosanna, that while I congratulate Bos-gan-soggarth for his good taste in liking you, I think it very strange and—shall I say it?—a bit callous of you to think of marrying a man who first of all killed your lover, Daneen, the poet, and——”

“Musha, Daneen—the Lord have mercy on him! Bad scran to him! I wasn’t long getting over my grief for him, asthore. And what’s more, a young widow woman can’t waste her bloom keening for ever over a corpse.”

“And yet, Rosanna, I remember hearing you lament his death, and saying very bitter things about the man who killed him.”

“I did that, asthore, and I own up to it, because I loved Daneen once. He was a sweet singer, and the grandest penny poet ever sold a ballad at a fair or pattern. But then Bos-gan-soggarth put the comether on me, asthore, and he was always making fun of the cowardly way Daneen met his death, him running away like a rat until he got stuck as he was wriggling through the bars of the gate. Is shariv an ierna, asthore. The truth is bitter. And I had to own up that Daneen was a dirty coward not to stand his ground and face his

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death like a man, instead of facing it with five bullets through the arse. And by dint of the ways he kept laughing about how Daneen died, I began to think that I was a fool to be crying about Daneen’s death. And then I began to fall in love with Bos-gan-soggarth himself more and more. I couldn’t help it, asthore.”

“But, Rosanna, he killed your father too. Surely you can’t marry a man who has your father’s blood on his hands—can you?”

“He only done it in self-defence, asthore, and me old da going to rip him open with a scythe. And anyways if he hadn’t given me da his death-blow, the hangman would some day be putting the rope round his thrapple anyways. The hangman was done out of his dues, that’s all.”

CHAPTER XV

TOLD BY THE TINKER'S WIDOW

(1)

“WELL, as you have been appointed as executor of Rosanna’s will and guardian of her children, it is only right that you should know the peculiar circumstances connected with her passing,” said Father Tom O’Hara, as he lit his pipe, and, leaning back in his armchair, held his lean hands towards the genial warmth of the turf fire. “Rosanna was infatuated with that wild ex-Black-and-Tan, Bos-gan-soggarth, and when he died——”

“By the way, what did he die of, Father Tom?”

“Delirium tremens. He took to drinking rather heavily for some months before his death. And, strange as it may seem, Rosanna was so heart-broken over his death that she actually pined away and died a few weeks later. The doctor said that it was galloping consumption, but that the symptoms connected with her disease were the most curious that ever came under his observation. It had undoubtedly been brought on, he said, by mal-nutrition. She had literally starved herself after Bos-gan-soggarth’s death. She simply refused to take any food for days on end.”

“But can you explain her extraordinary infatuation for that disreputable scoundrel, Father Tom?”

“I can. Poor Rosanna was obviously a throw-back—away back through many many generations of her

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ancestors to those forebears of hers in ancient times who worshipped brute force, and who held that no man could be called a man or could be worthy to mate with a woman until he had killed at least one fellow-man. Even at the present day there are people who hold this savage creed. There are, for instance, the nomad tribes of the Danakil regions in Abyssinia and of certain territories in Arabia. Rosanna, unconsciously or subconsciously, worshipped Bos-gan-soggarth because he was a killer. Although she would hardly admit it to herself, she admired Bos-gan-soggarth because he killed her father and her lover. By the way, did you ever notice how Rosanna, like her father, took a morbid delight in dwelling on details about public executions, for instance?"

"I could not help noticing it, Father Tom. It seemed to be an obsession with her."

"Well, that was a horrible sadistic streak in the poor young woman's make-up. It was a corollary to that admiration of the killer which was lurking in the hinterland of her mentality. Can you recall the name of the poet who wrote the lines :

'Old longings nomadic creep
Chafing 'gainst custom's chain
Still from its brumal sleep
Wakens the ferine strain'?"

"I have heard the lines before, but I don't know the name of the author, Father Tom. I understand your linking of cause and effect in this complex mystery of Rosanna's tragic fate. Well, Father Tom, you ought to know Rosanna's temperament better than I could, seeing that you were her confessor."

"Yes, I knew poor Rosanna's simple, primitive soul very well—a paleolithic soul with a paleolithic outlook. She was really a very good young woman, with a crude

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ethical code of her own. Well, I'm off to the chapel to hear confessions. I presume you are going to see Rosanna's mother. By the way, the shock of Rosanna's death has warped her mind somewhat, as you'll see for yourself. She is developing symptoms of senile decay, although she is certainly not an old woman—by Mayo standards. She is suffering from delusions—but you'll see for yourself. The nuns have charge of her grandchildren, and she goes to see them a couple of times a week. You'll be free in the evening of course, won't you? Come and have a bite and a sup with me at about seven."

"Thanks, Father Tom."

(2)

"Isn't it me that's delighted, if a poor twice-widowed woman, who has lost her only girleen, could know what delight is, to see you, agrah machree? And sure poor little Rosaneen always had a great grah for you asthore —she always said that it was you saved her from being shot by the soldiers in the wars in Trinity College. And many's the laugh she had over the ways I saved you from being eat alive by the black pig and you a gosoor. Ah! wirra! wirra! 'Tis lonesome for me sitting here now crouching over the turf fire, and hearing no sound but the wind in the chimney and the flames talking and whispering to other, in place of hearing my Rosaneen making jokes and singing and dancing—her that was so full of life and light. Oh! wirra! wirra! My poor empty hands and my poor empty life!"

She held her gaunt withered hands aloft with a feeble symbolic gesture, while tears coursed down her furrowed cheeks.

"Your life is not empty, Bridget," I said in an effort

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to sooth her misery. "You've got your grandchildren—Rosanna's children."

"They were took from me, asthore; they were took from me. Father Tom took them from me, and gave them to the nuns to rear. And whenever I beg the nuns to give them back to me, they only look at me with their cold, hard, holy eyes. There's no nature in them women at all, at all."

"Now, Bridget, you should not talk in such a way about the nuns—a good Catholic like you. Father Tom gave the children to the nuns to look after, because he knows that the task of rearing them would be too much for you. He told me that you were too—that you were too——"

"Too daft, asthore—isn't that it?" interposed old Bridget, her face hardening, and a challenging gleam coming into her eyes. "He told you that old Bridget had gone simple. And I'll be bound he said that I was a bad Catholic, and that I had turned a pagan—me that always goes to Mass and goes the whole round of my pair of beads three times a day—the joyful, the sorrowful and the glorious mysteries."

"No, Bridget; you are wronging Father Tom. He never said you were a pagan."

"Now listen to me, agrah machree, and I'll tell you why Father Tom took my grandchildren from me and gave them to the nuns. And when I tell you, mebbe 'tis how you'll say too that I'm a pagan or that I have gone simple. Rosaneen isn't dead at all, agrah. She is no more dead than Parnell is dead. The fairies took Rosaneen when she was grieving for the death of Bosgan-soggarth, and she wouldn't eat nor drink. She got the fear gurtha—the hunger sickness. Once before she got it, by dint of tramping the lonesome roads without food with her father—that trumper that was my second

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man and that done the hangman out of his dues by dint of the crack on the poll that he got from Bos-gan-sog-garth. She near died then, but the ban fassa, the handy-woman, old Maura McGrail, that helped to bring half the parish into the world, took the spell off her. But the second time she couldn't shake off the spell the fairies put on her, because the nuns took her into the convent to nurse her, and they wouldn't let the ban fassa go near her. My Rosaneen had no sickness of the lungs, nor no cough, but she pined away the ways of a girl would have the fear gurtha. And then myself I got very low with a queer fever, and when I was well again, the ban fassa came and told me that the fairies had took my Rosaneen for good and that they had carried her over the big sea to America, and that the young woman who had died in the convent and me sick in my bed and disremembering everything was the changeling the fairies left in her place. If so be that the nuns had let the ban fassa take the spell off my Rosaneen, she would be here with me to-day instead of being in America. Ochone! Ochone! asthore machree!"

"I'm sure she will come back to you soon," I said quietly, trying to assume a tone of conviction. Poor Bridget was a pathological case, I decided. The kindest course was to humour her obsession—to agree with her.

"The Irish never come back from America," she replied with a sigh. "They don't—barring a few broken-down Yanks and a few that's poor in the health, and mebbe a few robbers flying from the police like Boss Croker who settled down in the Dublin mountains and went in for horse-breeding and coursing hares."

"Well, maybe you'll go to America yourself to see Rosanna," I went on, desperately seeking to throw some sap of consolation to the poor distraught old woman.

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"I'm too old and feeble for the long journey," she said with a sigh. "Is Fairrige mor idir Eireann agus an Oileann nua."¹

A few weeks after my return from Mayo to London I got a letter from Father Tom O'Hara informing me that poor old Bridget Donnellan had passed away quietly, and that he had laid her to rest beside Rosanna in Boynmore churchyard.

And about a fortnight later I read in the *Western People* an account of the death of Father Tom O'Hara himself. Apparently he died from sheer exhaustion, as the result of attending to his sick parishioners who had been the victims of a virulent epidemic of influenza.

¹ Gaelic. "There is a big sea between Ireland and America."

THE END

